

**Chishtia Silsilah and the Delhi Sultanate:
A Study of Their Relationship during 13th and 14th
Centuries**



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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

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2005

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my individual research, and that it has not been submitted concurrently to any other university for any other degree.

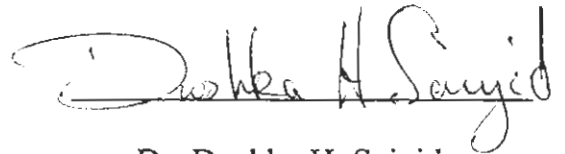
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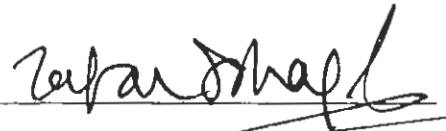
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A P P R O V A L
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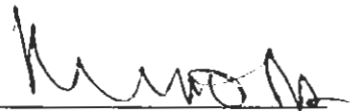
We hereby recommend that the dissertation written by Tanvir Anjum, titled "Chishtī Silsilah and the Delhi Sultanate: A Study of Their Relationship during 13th and 14th Centuries", be accepted for submission in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.



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Abstract

The present study tries to explore the dynamics of, and identify a possible pattern to, the relationship between the Chishtī Sufi *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi in India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The available literature studying the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi deals primarily with the relationship between the individual Chishtī Sufis and their contemporary Sultans. In such studies, however, the institutional landscape of the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate is missing. On the contrary, if a study focuses merely on the interaction between the two institutions, the role of the personalities and the significance of the personal factors are overlooked. The present study, therefore, tries to concurrently address the roles of Chishtī Sufis and the Sultans of Delhi in their individual as well as institutional contexts.

Soon after the inception of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India in the last decade of the twelfth century, Khwājah Mu‘in al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer, along with his contemporary Chishtī Shaykhs, laid down the principles of the *Silsilah*. They also carved out a space, an environment for independent action and practice of Chishtī principles, free from the interference of the state, for their *Silsilah* in the Sultanate of Delhi. In fact, from the very beginning, the Chishtīs made it a definite policy to keep a distance from the rulers for which the Chishtīs practiced the following principles: first, not accepting services under the Sultans; secondly, not accepting lands or *jāgīrs* from the Sultans, the ruling elite and other influential people; thirdly, not agreeing to visit of their *khānqāhs* by the Sultans; and lastly, not visiting the court of the Sultans of Delhi. In addition, the Chishtī Shaykhs used their individual judgment in regard to three things: first, the acceptance or rejection of the cash grants or *futūḥ* items offered by the Sultans and the *umarā’*, secondly, avoiding or admitting the *umarā’* in their company, and lastly, extending help to the Sultans or the Sultanate of Delhi.

During the ensuing decades, the Chishtīs expanded the space of their *Silsilah* by further dissemination of the Chishtī principles and more pronounced practice of them in the Sultanate. However, during the fourteenth century the state attempted to encroach on the space of the *Silsilah* by pressurizing the Chishtīs to compromise the extent of the practice of the principles of the *Silsilah*. In response, the Chishtī Shaykhs tried to defend and preserve the space of the *Silsilah*. Nonetheless, the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs, who had by now assumed the status of *sajjādah-nashīns*, or the hereditary guardians of the Chishtī shrines, tried to negotiate the space with the state by adjusting or redefining the limits of the independent space of the *Silsilah* in view of the state demands. Thus, in the Sultanate of Delhi during the two centuries, the official attitude towards the *Silsilah* witnessed considerable shifts a number of times. One may discern varied types of responses and interaction between them ranging from mutual respect, despite differences, to stresses and strains.

In studying the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi, the argument is that the relationship between these two institutions can be understood by taking 'space' as central to their interaction. The space was important for both the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate; for the adherents of the *Silsilah* to freely practice the Chishtī principles, and for the Sultanate for reasons of the perceived political importance of the space, and/or personal and religious/spiritual considerations of the Sultans. The study brings out that there is a discernable pattern to the interaction between the two. The Chishtī Shaykhs maintained a safe distance from the Sultans and the Delhi court, and also tried not to antagonize the political authorities by minimizing any chances of overt conflict with and open defiance of the state. In order to keep a distance from the state and politics, and maintain the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, the Chishtīs acted upon the above-mentioned principles, and at the same time used their individual judgment in some matters as well.

For arrangement of data, the present study employs a chronological scheme for studying the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Delhi Sultanate, though it periodizes their relationship in various phases in a thematic manner. After the first two introductory

chapters on Sufism and the Delhi Sultanate, the third chapter investigates how the Chishtī Sufis carved out an independent space for their *Silsilah* in the Sultanate. The fourth chapter explores how the eminent Chishtī Shaykhs, including Bābā Farīd and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’, expanded the space of their *Silsilah*. The fifth chapter analyzes the shift in the state policy towards the Sufis under Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, when the state tried to encroach on the space of the *Silsilah*, and the Chishtī Shaykhs tried to defend it. The sixth and the last chapter examines the attitude of the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs towards the state and political power, as some of them negotiated the autonomous space of the *Silsilah* with the state.

Yūsuf Gadā on the Chishtī Position regarding the State

Be a dervish and sit in solitude; do not ask for food from anyone.
Know that contentment is a kingdom, a mansion full of pearls and jewels.

Do not yourself go near the Sultan; know that the Sultan is such a one (that)
When you long for the Sultan, there will be fear and danger for you.

Never seek kindness and generosity from kings;
When you take a village or land, you will fall down in front of a door.

Do not follow the King's employment, know that there is continuous misfortune in it;
You will see little ease, more discomfort and punishment.

When someone else wears an official robe,
You should not consider him trustworthy.

When you go into the Sultan's assembly, you must guard your tongue;
Do not say anything in front of him, and when you come out to be as one who is deaf.

Do not go to Kings uncalled; but if they summon you, go instantly;
Obey their commands; know that this category is obligatory.

If anyone is obedient in a just act which the King demands,
Consider this better and more than sixty years of private worship.

A poem by Shaykh Yūsuf Gadā, a fourteenth-century Chishtī adept, and a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. From Carl W. Ernst and Bruce Lawrence's *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishtī Order in South Asia and Beyond*, p. 4.

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Nonetheless, the responsibility of all lapses and short comings in the thesis remain mine alone.

Tanvir Anjum

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

The following system of transliteration has been followed:

ا	a	ذ	dh	ق	q	ث	<u>th</u>	و	<u>ū</u>	
ب	b	ر	r	ک	k	جھ	<u>jh</u>	و (Urdu)	ō	
پ	p	ڑ	ṛ	گ	g	چھ	<u>ch</u>	ے (Urdu)	ē	
ت	t	ز	z	ل	l	دھ	<u>dh</u>	Short Vowels		
ٹ	<u>ṭ</u>	ژ	<u>z</u>	م	m	ڈھ	<u>dh</u>			ا
ٹھ	th	س	s	ن	n	ڈھ	<u>rh</u>			ی
ج	j	ش	sh	ں	ṇ	کھ	<u>kh</u>	و	u	
چ	ch	ص	ṣ	ہ	h	گھ	<u>gh</u>	Long Vowels		
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	ی	y	Long Vowels				
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	بھ	<u>bh</u>					ا
د	d	غ	gh	پھ	<u>ph</u>				آ	ā
ذ	<u>ḍ</u>	ف	f	تھ	<u>th</u>	ی	<u>ī</u>			

Diphthongs

Arabic	aw (Mawlānā)	و	<u>ū</u>	uww/uvv
Persian	au (Khusrau)			
Urdu	au (<i>aur</i>)	ی	<u>ī</u>	iyy
Arabic	ay (Shaykh)			
Persian	ai (Gardaizī)			
Urdu	ai (<i>Hairat</i>)			

Letter ء is transliterated as elevated comma (') and is not expressed when at the beginning. (*Asfīyā'*, *Awliyā'*, *'Ishā'*)

Letter ʿ is transliterated as elevated inverted comma ('). (*'Alī, samā'*, *'ilm*)

ض as Arabic letter is transliterated as *ḍ*, and as Persian/Urdu letter as *z*. (*Qāḍī, Khuzdār*)

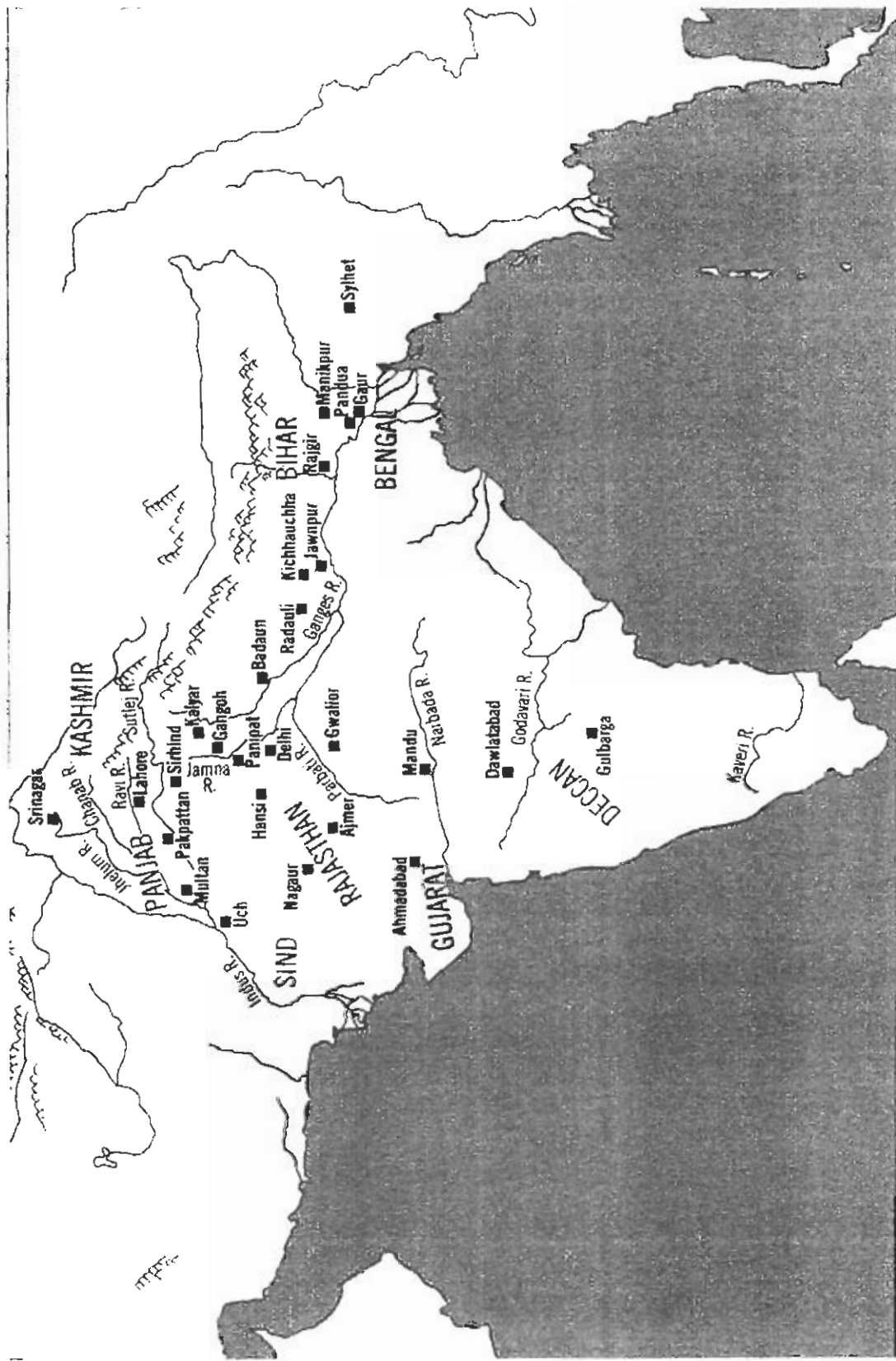
و as Arabic letter is transliterated as *w*, and as Persian/Urdu letter is transliterated as *v*. (*Mawlawī, Fatāwā, Dehlavī, Qazvīnī*)

ō is transliterated as *ah* in pause form and as *at* in construct form. (*Silsilah, Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*)

Article ʾ is transliterated as *al-* (*'l-* in construct form). (*al-Ghazzālī, Abū 'l-'Abbās*)

و as a Persian/Urdu conjunction is transliterated as *-o*. (*'Ilm-o 'Irfān, Dīn-o Dunyā*)

Short vowel — in Persian/Urdu possessive or adjectival form is transliterated as *-i*. (*Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī, Chirāgh-i Dehlī, Gulzār-i Abrār*)



Map of Major Sufi Centers of India during the Sultanate Era

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

The study explores the relationship between the Chishtī Sufi *Silsilah* (spiritual lineage or initiatic genealogy) and the Sultanate of Delhi in India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi underwent almost similar developments during the two centuries. The Chishtī *Silsilah* was introduced in India by Shaykh Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī (d. 1236) during the last decade of the twelfth century, whereas the victory at the second Battle of Tarā’in in 1192 laid a firm foundation for the Muslim rule in northern India, the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi by Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg taking place in 1206. The emergence of the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi was followed by their consolidation during the early decades of the thirteenth century. Both the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate then expanded to other regions of India. The mid-fourteenth century witnessed the emergence of local/provincial Chishtī centres in Bengal, Deccan, Gujrat and Mālwah, whereas regional Muslim kingdoms also sprang up in various parts of India.

One of the major factors which led to the establishment of Delhi Sultanate was the developments relating to the weakening of the authority of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate in the face of the rise of regional military leaders, including the Turks, who founded many

independent and semi-independent kingdoms in Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan. The Ghaūrid rulers, who were successors to the Ghaznavids, undertook the systematic conquest and annexation of India, and eventually, their Turkish slave-general, Aybeg, laid the foundation of the Sultanate of Delhi in northern India, practically independent of any higher political authority. The Sultanate bore a mark of Turco-Persian political traditions.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth century India, two major Sufi *silsilahs*, the Chishtiyyah and the Suhrawardiyyah, flourished in the Sultanate of Delhi. They earned considerable popularity and recognition among the people at large, as well as among the members of the royal family, *umarā'*, army, and the high state officials, but the Sufis of the two *silsilahs* presented quite different patterns of interaction with the political authorities in the Delhi Sultanate.

The Sufis of the Chishtī *Silsilah* followed a considered policy of detachment from the state and political affairs. The Chishtī Shaykhs distanced themselves from the court and the Sultans of Delhi. Their attitude towards the state was characterized by avoiding the company of the Sultans of Delhi, declining to accept *jāgīrs* (land grants) from the state, and shunning official titles and government service. They also debarred their *khulafā'* (sing. *khalīfah*; a spiritual successor) from joining the state services, and also refrained from involvement in issues of political nature. As opposed to the Chishtī position, the Sufis of the Suhrawardī *Silsilah* had cordial relations with the Sultans of

Delhi, and accepted titles, official positions, cash grants and land endowments from the state.

Scholars have studied the relationship between the Sultanate of Delhi and both the Sufi *Silsilahs*, the Chishtiyyah more so than the Suhrawardiyyah. The available literature studying the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi deals primarily with the relationship between the individual Chishtī Sufi Shaykhs and their contemporary Sultans. In such studies, however, the institutional landscape of the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate is missing. On the contrary, if a study focuses merely on the interaction between the two institutions, the role of the personalities and the significance of the personal factors are overlooked. Thus, there is not much literature which tries to concurrently address the roles of Chishtī Sufis and the Sultans of Delhi in their individual as well as institutional contexts.

The present study tries to explore the dynamics of the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi primarily as two institutions with their own traditions, as well as between the individual Chishtī Shaykhs and the Sultans of Delhi during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in northern India. During these two centuries, the Chishtī Sufis maintained a considered distance from the political authorities, but the official attitude towards the *Silsilah* witnessed considerable shifts a number of times. One may discern varied types of responses and interaction between them ranging from mutual respect, despite differences, to stresses and strains. This study

seeks to inquire whether there was some pattern to the interaction between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi in the said period.

The present study tries to address mainly the following questions: After the introduction of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India, how did the Chishtī Shaykhs carve a space, an environment for independent action and practice, which was relatively free from state interference? How the space so carved and the environment so created was expanded by the Chishtīs in the subsequent decades by articulating more clearly the principles of the *Silsilah*'s conduct, and by more pronounced practice and dissemination of such principles? How was the space defended and preserved by the Chishtīs when the state undertook determined measures to encroach upon the *Silsilah*'s independence, trying to force the Chishtī Shaykhs to accept certain things which the *Silsilah* found to be against its traditions and principles? The study will also consider the nature of a particular response, that virtually resulted in a readjustment in the established Chishtī practices, and which may be described as negotiating the *Silsilah*'s independent space in the Sultanate of Delhi. This was a response by some later lineal descendants of the eminent Chishtī Shaykhs, popularly taken to be Chishtī Shaykhs (without being spiritual or initiatic successors), who accepted titles, positions and *jāgīrs* from certain Sultans.

Scope of the Study

The chronological span for the present study covers the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, while the spatial-geographical scope of the study spans the whole of the Indian Subcontinent. It is primarily focused on the main line of Chishtī *Silsilah*, and its main

branch or sub-lineage, such as the Chishtī-Nizāmī. Similarly, the study deals with the Sultanate of Delhi, while other independent kingdoms flourishing in the Indian Subcontinent during the said period, such as the Kingdoms of Khāndēsh and Bahmanī, have only been referred to where necessary.

In the thirteenth century, the Chishtī *Silsilah* mainly flourished in the Sultanate of Delhi in northern India. However, after the first quarter of the fourteenth century, a prominent Chishtī Shaykh was ordered by his preceptor to proceed to Deccan for the propagation of Islam and the spiritual guidance of Muslims. In this way, the *Silsilah* transcended the confines of northern India and spread to the south. In the mid-fourteenth century, some of the Chishtī Sufis were compelled by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq (r. 1325-51) to migrate to Deccan in the south, though the Chishtī leader, the principal spiritual successor and head of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, still lived in Delhi. In fact, by that time, the territorial stretch of the Sultanate of Delhi had extended the Muslim rule to the southern regions, which had mainly prompted the Sultan to shift his capital from Delhi to Dēvāgīr (renamed Dawlatabād) in Deccan. In addition to the Chishtī Shaykhs, the Sultan had also ordered the *umarā'*, the influential people, the Sufis, traders, artisans and craftsmen to migrate to the new capital. Nevertheless, Deccan could not be ruled effectively, and consequently, the Bahmanī Sultans wrested the political control of Deccan, and established their own independent Kingdom in the region. Towards the close of the fourteenth century, it was in the Bahmanī Kingdom of Deccan that the main line of the Chishtī *Silsilah* flourished. Since the present study is confined to the Sultanate of Delhi, other kingdoms have only been referred to wherever required.

Significance of the Study

The present study is significant both from theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, the study tries to explore the principles guiding the conduct of Chishtī Sufis vis-à-vis the Sultanate of Delhi, and to identify a possible pattern to the relationship between the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate as two institutions. Empirically, it tries to bring out a new perspective and offer a new interpretation of the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi. Examining their relationship in a chronological sequence, the study periodizes it thematically in various phases, and arranges data in terms of these phases. The present study also contributes to the literature on the subject, since there is hardly any systematic study on the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi as two institutions. The study of interaction between Sufism and state in general is also significant from the perspective of present-day state-Sufi relationship. Not only Sufism is believed to be a living reality in the present day South Asia,¹ the people associated with Sufism still influence the political processes and the exercise of power to a considerable degree.

¹ Charles Lindholm, who undertook a comparative study of Sufism in the Middle East and South Asia in contemporary times, concluded that in the Middle East, Sufism has more or less vanished 'as an active force', but it had remained 'influential' in South Asia. Idem, "Prophets and Pirs: Charismatic Islam in the Middle East and South Asia", in *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality and Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*, ed. Pnina Werbner and Helena Basu (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 209. Lindholm argues that the "relative success of Sufism in South Asia has its roots in a sociocultural context wherein hierarchical distinctions between human beings are taken for granted and where the local autonomy and moral authority of powerful Sufi brotherhoods have largely been retained." p. 209. He further says that "Sufism is therefore holding its own and perhaps even growing in South Asia, while it has simultaneously been marginalized and delegitimized in the Middle East." p. 225.

The thirteenth and fourteenth century India is significant from the standpoints of the Sultanate of Delhi and the Chishtī *Silsilah*, as discussed briefly hereunder:

The thirteenth and fourteenth century India witnessed the emergence and consolidation of Muslim rule there. This era can be seen as a formative phase in the establishment of the Muslim rule in India. Political authority and state structures that emerged in these two centuries, influenced the exercise of power, authority patterns and political institutions in ensuing centuries, and still continue to inform them to a certain extent. The Delhi Sultanate is also important because a majority of its subjects were native non-Muslims, primarily Hindu by faith, whereas the ruling elite was predominantly comprised of Muslims, who were either migrants from West and Central Asia, Iraq, Arabia, Persia and Afghanistan, or were the descendants of these migrants. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, India was the only region where a Muslim minority ruled over a non-Muslim majority, in contrast to the Muslim lands where there was an overwhelming majority of the Muslim population, living under the tutelage of various Muslim states.

The thirteenth and fourteenth century India not only witnessed the development and growth of Sufism and the mushrooming of various Sufi *silsilahs* in India, but also the introduction of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in northern India, which later spread to the south as well. The Chishtiyyah is considered to be the oldest, most popular, and the largest Sufi *Silsilah* of India. In the Sultanate of Delhi, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it also remained the most influential *Silsilah*. Though it originated in Persia, it was

introduced in India by Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer in the last decade of the twelfth century. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the rules and principles of the *Silsilah*, particularly its attitude towards the state and political authorities, emerged from the practices of the pre-Indian Chishtīs, and its practices were institutionalized. In the ensuing centuries, the behaviour of the later Chishtī Sufis was assessed and ascertained against the standards set by the early Chishtī masters in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In other words, the Chishtī traditions during these two centuries serve as a yardstick for the latter day Chishtīs for comparative purposes. The memory of the traditions and the code of conduct evolved by the leading Chishtī Sufis of the said period, are still cherished by the adherents of Sufism in general, and the devotees of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in particular. Therefore, it appears quite important to study the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Delhi Sultanate during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Review of Literature

A good deal of literature is available on the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi. It is difficult to categorize the literature in separate and independent categories, since they are not exclusive, and have significant linkages with each other. The review of literature has been divided into the three following sections for the purpose of convenience: (i) literature on Chishtī Sufism, (ii) literature dealing with the political ethos of the Sultanate of Delhi, and (iii) studies on the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Delhi Sultanate.

Section I Literature on Chishtī Sufism

The available literature on Sufis and Sufism ranges from anecdotal or popular literature, which is mostly semi-scholarly in nature, to scholarly works grounded in rigorous academic traditions. The secondary sources consulted for the study, which include a wide variety of literature, have been reviewed under the following heads: works on Indian Sufism partly focusing on Chishtī *Silsilah*, biographies of Chishtī Sufis, and studies on Chishtī *Silsilah*.

1. Works on Indian Sufism partly focusing on Chishtī *Silsilah*

There is a plethora of literature dealing with Indian Sufism, which partly covers the history of Chishtī *Silsilah* during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Some of these include the following:

Saiyyid Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s *Bazm-i Ṣūfiyah* (1949, rpt. 1990) discusses the life and teachings of the major Sufis of India during the pre-Mughal era. These Sufis include the renowned Chishtī Shaykhs of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as well. In addition to the life sketches, teachings and works of these Sufis, the study also highlights their relationship with the Sultans of Delhi. The work is primarily of a descriptive nature, and lacks interpretation and analysis of the relationship of the Sufis with the political authorities.

The third volume of Abū ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadvī’s *Tārīkh-i Da’wat-o ‘Azīmat* (1963) deals with the Chishtī Sufis. It provides valuable information about the main line of the

Chishtī Shaykhs of the Sultanate era. It highlights the biographical sketches and teachings of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Mas‘ūd in one chapter, but discusses the life and times, and teachings of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’ at length by devoting six chapters (from 2 to 7) to it. This disproportionate division of data reveals that there exists a plethora of literature, including primary sources, dealing with the life and times of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, whereas there is relatively meagre information available about the first three Chishtī Shaykhs of India. Largely descriptive in nature, this study lacks in systematic analysis of the data presented in it.

The collected works of Professor Mohammad Habib in two volumes, *Politics and Society in Early Medieval Period* (1974), have been edited by Nizami, and include many articles related to Sufis and Sufism. Though brief and precise, they offer very useful insights into the lives and teachings of Chishtī Sufis, such as Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn *Chirāgh-i Dehlī* and the lay-Sufi poet and music composer, Amīr Khusrau. An important article included in it, a pioneering work on the subject, deals with the authenticity of Sufi literature, including the *malḡūzāt*, or the conversations of the Sufi Shaykhs in their assemblies recorded by their disciples. This collection of articles also includes research articles dealing with the state and politics in the Sultanate era. However, none of these articles analyze the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Delhi Sultanate in a methodical way.

Another monumental work on Indian Sufism is Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi's *A History of Sufism in India* (1986). Its first volume covers the history of Sufism in India till 1600 A.D. In addition to the Suhrawardiyyah, Firdawsiiyyah and Kubrawiyyah, it deals with the history of the Chishtiyyah. It studies the renowned Shaykhs of these *silsilahs*, their notable *khulafā'* and eminent disciples, and particularly highlights their literary contributions. Moreover, it discusses the *qalandars*, martyrs, and the legendary and semi-legendary Sufis in India as well. The work also critically examines the relationship of these eminent Sufis, including the Chishtī Shaykhs, with the political authorities. Nonetheless, the scope of the work does not allow it to take into account the shifts in the policies of the Sultans of Delhi towards the Sufis, since it is primarily a work on Sufism, and not on the state.

Another relevant work is Muhammad Aslam's *Malfūzātī Adab kī Tārīkhī Ahammiyyat* (1995). It presents a study of twenty-nine various *malfūzāt*, or Sufi discourses, of leading Sufis of various *silsilahs* in India in separate chapters. It includes, among others, the study on important Chishtī *malfūzāt* such as *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, *Durr-i Nizāmī*, *Surūr al-Şudūr*, *Khayr al-Majālis*, *Aḥsan al-Aqwāl*, *Nafā'is al-Anfās*, and *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*. The work furnishes us with valuable information on the relationship of the Sufis with the Sultans of Delhi extracted from these primary sources, which can be treated as alternative sources of history. However, the scope of the work does not include analysis and examination of the policies of the Sultans of Delhi towards the Sufis.

Riazul Islam's *Sufism in South Asia: Impact on Fourteenth Century Muslim Society* (2002) is a collection of articles dealing with the various aspects of Indian Sufism during the fourteenth century. It examines Sufism as a historical phenomenon. Its sixth chapter, "Political Ideas and Practice of the Sufi Masters: Ghazzali to Sayyid Gesudaraz", examines and analyzes the attitude of the Chishtī Sufis from Shaykh Mu'īn al-Dīn to Khwājah Bandahnawāz Gēsūdirāz towards the state, as well as that of the Shaykhs of other Sufī *silsilahs*. The work also includes interesting articles on *futūḥ* (unsolicited charity) and *kasb* (livelihood), which provide very useful insights in the economic aspects of the Chishtī *khānqāhs*, and the views of the Chishtī Sufis on earning one's livelihood respectively. Again, the scope of this work does not allow studying the policies and perceptions of the Sultans of Delhi regarding these Sufis.

Rich in empirical data, these works unfold many new dimensions in Indian Sufism, particularly pertaining to the Chishtī *Silsilah*. Nonetheless, this literature is largely descriptive and narrative in nature, and somewhat deficient in explanation and analysis of the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi. Though these studies contribute considerably to the understanding of their relationship, they also bring home the need for a detailed and a systematic analytical study of their relationship them as two institutions.

2. Biographies of Chishtī Sufis

A large number of biographies have appeared on the Chishtī Sufis, but a considerable body of this literature consists of semi-scholarly or popular biographical works, and very

few scholarly works have been written on the lives of the Chishtī Sufis. Among the scholarly contributions to the subject, some meticulous studies have been undertaken by the scholars of the Aligarh school, most notably Professor Mohammad Habib and Khaliq Ahmad Nizami. Their biographies are, in fact, more than a chronology of the life of the Chishtī Sufis. These works critically examine their teachings and doctrines in proper historical and social context. As for the semi-scholarly or popular biographical works, these have largely been contributed by the devotees of the Chishtī Sufis. However, most of these devotee-biographers have failed to pay attention to the question of the authenticity of Sufi texts like *malfūzāt*, and focus more on the miracles of the Sufis.

Some of the important biographies on Chishtī Sufis include Muhammad Salim's *The Holy Saint of Ajmer* (1949), K. A. Nizami's *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-u'd-Din Ganj-i-Shakar* (1955), Zahurul Hassan Sharib's *Khwaja Gharib Nawaz* (1961), Iqbāl al-Dīn Aḥmad's *Tadhkirah-'i Gēsūdirāz* (1966), Mohammad Habib's *Ḥaḍrat Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā': Ḥayāt aur Ta'limāt* (1970), Jafar Qasimi's *Baba Fariduddin Mas'ud Ganj-i-Shakar* (1971), W. D. Begg's *The Big Five of India in Sufism* (1972), Gurbachan Singh Talib's *Baba Sheikh Farid: His Life and Teaching* (1973), "Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud *Chiragh-i Dehli* as a Great Historical Personality", in K. A. Nizami's edited work *Collected Works of Professor Mohammad Habib--Politics and Society in Early Medieval Period* (1974), B. S. Anand's *Baba Farid* (1975), W. D. Begg's *The Holy Biography of Hazrat Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti* (1977), Nizami's two other works, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli* (1991), and *The Life and Times of Shaikh*

Nizam-u'd-din Auliya' (1991), and Shabbīr Ḥasan Nizāmī Chishtī's *Sawāniḥ-i Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakar* (n.d.)

Some of the above-mentioned biographies partly study the relationship of the Chishtī Shaykhs with their contemporary Sultans of Delhi. In particular, Habib and Nizami have paid attention to the study of the attitude of the Chishtī Shaykhs towards the state and political power, and the relationship of the Sultans of Delhi with them, in their biographical works. Nonetheless, owing to the limitations of the scope of these works, the policies of the Sultans of Delhi towards the Chishtī Shaykhs, and the factors influencing these policies, remain under-treated in them.

3. Studies on Chishtī *Silsilah*

Many scholarly works have exclusively dealt with the history of Chishtī *Silsilah* in India. An important systematic and scholarly work is K. A. Nizami's *Tārīkh-i Mashā'ikh-i Chisht* (1980). In addition to a preliminary discussion on the evolution and sources of Sufism, and the organization of *silsilahs*, it examines the development and growth of the Chishtī *Silsilah* till its revival in the eighteenth century. In addition, it particularly focuses on the spiritual training, role of the *khānqāhs*, relationship of the Chishtī Sufis with the people, including Hindus, the Chishtī practice of *samā'* (devotional Sufi music), the ideological foundations the *Silsilah*, and the relationship of the Chishtī Sufis with the '*ulamā'*'. The work highlights the less-known aspects of the lives and teachings of the Chishtī Sufis, and fills an important gap in scholarly research on Indian Sufism. Though

quite analytical, the work does not treat the relationship of the Chishtī Sufis with the Sultanate of Delhi.

There are some studies on the Chishtī *Silsilah* which have a regional focus as well. For instance, Gholam Rasool's work *Chishti-Nizami Sufi Order of Bengal (till mid 15th century) and its Socio-religious Contribution* (1990), studies a sub-branch of Chishtīs, originating from Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā'. As its title indicates, it deals with the contribution of the Chishtī-Nizāmī Sufis of Bengal to society and religion, and only tangentially focuses on the relationship of the Chishtī- Nizāmī Sufis with the state.

Some works on individual Chishtī Sufis are thematically organized. For instance, P. M. Currie's work, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'in al-dīn Chishtī of Ajmer* (1989) deals with the history of Khwājah Mu'in al-Dīn and his shrine, including its administration, endowments and finances of the *dargāh*. In addition, it discusses in detail the issues relating to *sajjādah-nashīnī* or hereditary succession of the shrine guardians, including their relationship with the political authorities. In the opinion of Liebeskind, the work does not take into account the shrine's "relationship with the wider Muslim community".² Moreover, as its title indicates, it examines the 'development of the legend' of Khwājah Mu'in al-Dīn as constructed from the 'few facts' in the debris of historical accounts (p. 66). The approach employed in the study seems to be based on the presupposition that the Khwājah was an ahistorical figure, whose life and times were concocted by later-day hagiographers, without much reliable data. It seems to deny the possibility that many

² Claudia Liebeskind, *Piety on its Knees: Three Sufi Traditions in South Asia in Modern Times* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 4.

primary sources dealing with the Khwājah, which must have been consulted by later day hagiographers, might have perished over centuries.

Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini's work *Sayyid Muḥammad al Husaynī-i-Gisudīrāz: On Sufism*, (1983) deals with the views of Khwājah Gēsūdīrāz pertaining to issues in Sufism, such as Prophethood and Saintship, and *samā'*. The study does not take into account the views of the Khwājah regarding the political authorities. *The Chishtīs: A Living Light* by Muneera Haeri (2000), is another work on the five leading Chishtī Sufis of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, beginning with Shaykh Mu'īn al-Dīn of Ajmer and coming down to Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. Though the work is more biographical by nature, presenting an account of the five Chishtī Sufis in its various chapters, one comes across some information on the relationship of these Sufis with the state. However, it is more narrative and descriptive, lacking in analysis and interpretation.

Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence's *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond* (2002) is a very incisive and brilliant methodological inquiry into Sufism, with a focus on the Chishtī *Silsilah*. It argues that the Chishtī *Silsilah* is "more than a parasitical legitimization of power or a nostalgic reverence for bygone saints; it is instead a complex of spiritual practice, historical memory, and ethical models, which continues to evolve..." (p. 1). Arguing for the *Silsilah*'s inclusiveness, it contends that the Chishtī experience is not limited to Sufis, or Muslims, or South Asians; others like non-Muslims such as Hindus and Sikhs, and the non-South Asians, have also participated in it. It treats the *Silsilah* as a 'mystical movement', which is distinctive from other *silsilahs*

in two ways: first, the ethical relations of the great Chishtī Sufīs to institutional power, and secondly, its distinctive spiritual practices like *samāʿ* or devotional music. It brings out the historical disconnect between the western scholarship and the Chishtī literary tradition, while critically reviewing the prevalent approaches in the studies on Sufism, as well as the Chishtī hagiographical tradition. The work also examines the primary characteristics of early Chishtī masters, the Chishtī practice of pilgrimage to Sufī shrines and the controversies over it. The Chishtīs of the colonial era have been treated under the heads of two major sub-lineages of the Chishtīs, the Nizāmiyyah-Chishtiyyah and Ṣābiriyyah-Chishtiyyah, since the two varied in their approach. It explores how the modern day Chishtīs are responding to the challenges posed by the realities in the contemporary world, and employing new forms and mediums of communication to disseminate the teachings of Sufism and the Chishtī masters. The work also challenges the three-fold model of classicism, decline, and revival of Sufism in general, and questions the idea of the decline and revival of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in particular. It periodizes the history of the Chishtī *Silsilah* by proposing five divisions, which are “not defined in terms of greatness and decline but in terms of their faithfulness to Chishtī values and norms.” (p. 13). Like most of the above-mentioned studies on Chishtī *Silsilah*, this work also does not deal with the relationship of the Chishtīs with the political authorities in detail.

Section II Literature dealing with the Sultanate of Delhi

There is a plethora of literature dealing with the various aspects of the Sultanate of Delhi. These aspects include the state and politics, state policies, administration and

administrative reforms, the role of political actors like *umarā'*, military history, society and economy. In addition, several works on the role and achievements of individual Sultans of Delhi, and various dynasties of the Sultanate era have also appeared.

There are works dealing with the general history of the Sultanate era, or some of its specific period such as Lane-Poole's *Mediaeval India under Muhammedan Rule (A.D. 712-1764)* (1903), Majumdar, Raychaudhuri and Datta's *An Advanced History of India* (1950), A. B. M. Habibullah's *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (1961), Peter Jackson's work *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (1999), and the second volume of Andre' Wink's *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World* (1999), dealing with its history from eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. These works primarily deal with the history of political developments in the Sultanate of Delhi. Some of them are largely descriptive, whereas a few of them offer analysis on political developments as well.

Some works on the Sultanate of Delhi deal with the history of one dynasty. For instance, Aziz Ahmad's *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290)* (1987) studies the political history and political institutions of the Ilbarī Dynasty of the Turks (the so-called Slave or Mamlūk Dynasty) ruling the Sultanate of Delhi during the thirteenth century. Similarly, Saran Lal's *History of the Khaljis A.D. 1290-1320*, (1950), Ishwari Prasad's *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India* (1936), and Agha Mahdi Husain's *Tughluq Dynasty* (1963) are focused on the study of the Khalji and Tughluq Dynasties. Similarly, some of the studies deal with the reign of one Sultan

of Delhi. These include, amongst others, Ghulam Sarwar Khan Niazi's *The Life and Works of Sultun Alauddin Khalji* (1990), Agha Mahdi Husain's *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq* (1938), and Banerjee's *History of Firuz Shah Tughluq* (1967).

The political philosophy of the Sultans of Delhi has been studied by Khurram Qadir in his unpublished doctoral dissertation "The Political Theory and Practice of the Sultanate of Delhi" (submitted 1992). The administrative structure of the Delhi Sultanate has been the focus of I. H. Qureshi's monumental work *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi* (1944). Agha Hussain Hamadani's *The Frontier Policy of the Delhi Sultans* (1986) discusses how the Sultans dealt with the problem of the Mongol invasions. Nigam's *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, 1206-1398 A.D.* (1967) examines the role of the *umarā'* in the politics of the Delhi Sultanate. Rekha Pande's *Succession in the Delhi Sultanate* (1990) explores the varied patterns of succession among the Sultans of Delhi, whereas Nizami's *Royalty in Medieval India* (1997) covers the entire spectrum of the royal life in the Sultanate of Delhi.

In addition to these works, several scholarly articles contributed by eminent historians have been published in various reputed research journals. These works provide very useful information and insights into the varied dimensions of the conduct of the state in the Sultanate era.

Section III Studies on the Relationship of Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Delhi Sultanate

There is very scanty literature exclusively focused on the study of the relationship of the Chishtī *Silsilah* with the Sultanate of Delhi. In addition to a few books, this literature primarily includes research articles studying the various aspects of the state-Sufi relationship.

One of the most important works discussing the relationship between the Chishtī Sufis and the Sultans of Delhi is K. A. Nizami's *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujḥānāt* (1958). Though it primarily deals with the religious orientation of the Sultans of Delhi, as its title also indicates, it also examines the Sultans' relationship with the Sufis of various *silsilahs* including the Chishtiyyah. Moreover, it explores the religious policies of the Delhi Sultans, and the varied influences on them. It studies their views about religion, the role of religion in state policies, and their relationship with the jurists, theologians, scholars or the '*ulamā*', as well as the eminent Sufis living in the Sultanate of Delhi. Rich in empirical evidence and historical explanations, the work provides very useful information and insights into the religious policies of the Sultans of Delhi.

Nizami's another work, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (1961), explores the dynamics as well as interplay of religion and politics in the Sultanate of Delhi. It not only discusses the major political institutions, practices and actors of the Delhi Sultanate, but also casts some light on the role of the Chishtīs in the Indian polity during the thirteenth century. Besides analyzing their organization, ideology and practices, it also highlights the attitude of the Chishtī Sufis

towards the state at some length. This brilliant work, however, deals with the religion and politics during the thirteenth century India, and does not cover the fourteenth century, first half of which marks the apogee of the Sultanate, while the latter half is characterized by the decline and weakening of the central authority of the Sultanate of Delhi.

Saiyyid Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s *Hindustān kē Salāṭīn*, ‘*Ulamā’ aur Mashā’ikh kē Ta’lluqāt par ēk Naẓar* (1964) studies the triangular relationship between the kings, ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufis in India. Chronologically, it covers the Sultanate and the Mughal era, but does not demarcate between the two periods. Therefore, while analyzing the triangular relationship, it switches over from one era to another frequently. The study discusses the nature of Muslim rule, addressing the question how far it was ‘Islamic’. It deals with important issues like imposition of *jizyah* (poll-tax) on the Hindus, preaching of Islam, and controversy over *samā’*. However, the usefulness of the work has been marred by a number of weaknesses. It has organizational lapses, as it does not contain any chapter, sections or sub-sections, and presents the account in one go. There is a lack of chronological sequence in the work as well. For instance, after discussing the Sufis in the post-‘Ālamgīr era, it analyzes Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Fīrūz Tughluq’s clash with the Sufis, followed by a discussion on the relationship between Emperor Jahāngīr and Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī Mujaddid Alf Thānī (pp. 132-146). There are conceptual problems in the work as well. For instance, the author uses the epithet *Salāṭīn* for all kings, irrespective of the fact that the Mughal Emperors did not assume this title, as they styled themselves as *pādshāh*. Similarly, the ‘*ulamā*’ have been categorized in the study, (pp. 11-19) but it does not differentiate them from the Sufis at a conceptual level.

Though the work partly focuses on the relationship of the Chishtī Sufis with both the kings and the ‘*ulamā*’, it fails to treat it systematically, as the data and analysis is scattered throughout the book.

In addition to the above, there are a few research articles that are focused on the Chishtī Sufis’ interaction with the Delhi Sultanate. These include the following:

K. A. Nizami’s series of articles on “Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and their Attitude towards the State” in *Islamic Culture* (1948, 1949 and 1950) is a pioneering effort in the field of studying the state-Sufi relationship. Nizami has briefly compared the attitudes of the Chishtīs and Suhrawardīs towards the state, before analyzing the attitude of the Chishtī Sufis towards the political authorities in detail. Tracing the origin of the Chishtī attitude in early Sufi traditions, including the philosophy of life and practices of the Sufis, he has identified the following principles of the Chishtī ideology: (i) abstention from kings and court, (ii) rejection of *jāgīrs*, (iii) and rejection of government service. Moreover, the attitude of the Sultans of Delhi towards the Chishtī Sufis has been briefly highlighted. The author has frequently cited from the apocryphal *malḥūzāt* of the Chishtī Sufis without questioning their historical authenticity. Though large in scope, these articles are very brief, which do not treat the subject in detail.

A relevant but a very brief article is “The Attitude of the Chishti Saints towards Political Power”, presented in the Pakistan History Conference (1952) by Muhammad Salim. It briefly discusses the views of some of the eminent Chishtī Shaykhs regarding

political power, but it does not treat their interaction with the Sultans of Delhi. *Malfūzāt* like *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* and *Khayr al-Majālis* have been consulted for the study, but disregarding of the principles of historical criticism, sources such as *Asrār Awliyā'* have been uncritically utilized, the authenticity of which is questioned by many historians.

Another brilliant article on the subject is Aziz Ahmad's "The Sufis and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India" in *Der Islam* (1962). Though the title suggests that it deals with the Sufis in general, the study primarily focuses on the Sufis of the Chishtī *Silsilah*. The Suhrawardī Sufis find sporadic mention in it, especially where the approaches of the two *silsilahs* towards the state have been contrasted. It highlights the attitude of the Chishtī Shaykhs towards political power as well as examines their relationship with the Delhi Sultans. It discusses the impact of the ideas of Ibn al-'Arabī and Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, which were non-Indian in origin, on the state and society, particularly on Sufism, in India. It also investigates how Sufism gradually declined in India, which in turn weakened Islam in India, (p. 153) and how the later Chishtīs bowed to the political authorities by accepting royal favours. The work presents an excellent analysis of the state-Sufi interaction in the said era, but it makes an over-generalization that "on the whole the Delhi Sultanate was suspicious of the Chishtī order..." (p. 147). The study fails to take into account the shifts in the policy of the Sultans of Delhi towards the Chishtī Sufis, and the factors which informed these shifts.

Muhammad Salim's article "Shaykh Nizam-ud-din Awliya' and the Sultans of Dehli" in *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society* (1967) presents a brief account of the

relationship between Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn and his contemporary Sultans of Delhi. It discusses the major historical developments that help assess the devotion or hostility of the Sultans of Delhi to the Shaykh. The article is concise, lacking in explanation and a systematic analysis of the relationship between the Shaykh and the Sultans.

Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui's article, "The Early Chishtī *Dargāhs*" in Christian W. Troll's *Muslim Shrines in India* (1989), briefly discusses the relationship of the descendents of early Sufis of Chishtī *Silsilah* with the Sultans of Delhi. Similarly, Simon Digby's article, "The Sufi Shaykh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India" in *Iran* (1990), discusses the relations between the Sufi Shaykhs and the Sultans of Delhi with reference to the concept of *wilāyat* or spiritual domain of a Sufi Shaykh in Sufism. It also assesses the role of the Sufi Shaykhs of various *silsilahs* as 'king-makers' since, according to the Sufi belief, the Sufis at times bestowed kingship upon individuals. It argues that the Muslim rulers were the *de facto* power-holders of the regions over which the Sufi Shaykhs exercised their authority, and the latter had a direct influence on the political events as well (p. 71).

Ishtiyāq Aḥmad Zillī's "*Mashā'ikh-i Chisht aur Ḥukūmat-i Waqt: Bāhimī Rawābiḥ kā Tajziyyah*" in *Maḍāmin-i Taṣawwuf* (1998), edited by Muḥammad Idrīs, is a very brief article analyzing the relationship between the Chishtī Shaykhs and the Sultanate of Delhi. The assertion of the author that Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn strengthened the influence of each other (p. 37) is not well-founded. Since during the reign of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn, a number of *umarā'* and members of the royal

family entered the fold of the discipleship of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, Zilli argues that these developments were tantamount to extending official patronage to the Chishtī *Silsilah* (pp. 38, 43). It cannot be taken to suggest that the *Silsilah* had accepted the state patronage, since Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn kept himself aloof from the court and the Sultans, and never gave *khilāfat* or spiritual succession to any of these members of the ruling elite and the royal family. In addition, it must be remembered that the Shaykh never discussed any political issue with his disciples, including the *umarā'* and the members of the ruling elite, or with anyone else, as evidenced from the discourses recorded in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*. Zilli further argues that joining the Chishtī *Silsilah* by the *umarā'* and members of the ruling elite indirectly proved beneficial for the state, as the encouragement of the Sufī principles of renunciation of the world and self-denial, which encouraged passivity, among these disciples served the interests of the Sultan (p. 37). It may be contended here that after becoming disciples of the Shaykh, it was not demanded from these *umarā'* and the ruling elite to give up their jobs or sever their ties with the Sultan and others.

Sunil Kumar's article, "Assertions of Authority: A Study of the Discursive Statements of Two Sultans of Delhi" in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies* by Alam, Delvoye and Gaborieau (2000), studies the contending sets of discursive statements of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' concerning the moral right to authority. Employing a post-modernist approach, the work takes into account the competing discourses of the two protagonists, while studying the textual strategies used by them. It analyzes the Sultan's contribution to Delhi's *Jāmi'a Mosque*, and its architectural form and inscriptions as a discursive text, which expresses

the structures of beliefs and conduct supporting his claim to authority. It also examines Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's conversations recorded in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, which contradicted the structures of thought and beliefs, which empowered the Sultan's claim to authority. Moreover, while studying the works of Amīr Khusrau and Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī, Kumar also explores how they responded to the discursive statements of the two protagonists. It argues that although the Shaykh's discourses expanded an alternative universe of Islam, weakening the structures supporting the Sultan's claims to moral authority, the former "did not construct a 'competing' ideology; his was the authoritative version of Islam." (p. 61). The article brings out new dimensions in the Sultan-Sufi relationship in the Sultanate era, and provides very valuable insights into it.

Notwithstanding the contribution of the literature dealing with the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi reviewed above, in understanding the dynamics of the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate, and their mutual relationship, there is a need to study and examine the interaction between them as a two-way process in a more systematic manner. This needs to be done in a coherent framework, keeping in view the fact that the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi exhibited some consistencies as well as shifts in their attitudes towards each other respectively. The present study is thus an attempt to fill this very gap in studies on the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi.

Framework of Analysis

Most of the existing literature on the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi focuses on the life and teachings of the Chishtī Shaykhs, and the state and politics in the Sultanate

of Delhi. Two broad approaches seem to characterize these studies. Either the studies are state-centric, dealing with the state and politics of the Delhi Sultanate, and partly discussing the relationship of the Sultans with the Sufis, or Sufi-centric, focusing on the life and teachings of the Chishtī Sufis, including their *khulafā'*, and treating their attitude towards the political authorities, and relationship with the Delhi Sultans. That is, the available literature deals with the relationship between the individual Sufis and their contemporary Sultans. But the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi cannot be reduced to the personalities of the individual Chishtī Shaykhs--the heads of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, or the Sultans of Delhi. The mere interaction between two individuals representing the two institutions--the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate--cannot adequately explain the dynamics of the interaction between them. Similarly, any study of the interaction between the two institutions would be deficient if the role of individual personalities and the personal factors is not taken into account. Therefore, there is a need for addressing concurrently the roles of Sufis and the Sultans of Delhi in their individual as well as institutional contexts.

The Chishtī *Silsilah* as an institution traced its spiritual genealogy to the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) through a chain of such eminent Sufis as Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728), Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 779), and Fuḍayl ibn 'Ayāḍ (d. 802). These Sufis avoided contact with the rulers, but when they did come into contact with them, they admonished even the Muslim Caliphs of the day for their indulgence in worldly luxuries and negligence of their duties to the Creator and His creatures. They urged them to rule with justice, reminding them that, on the Resurrection Day, God would question them concerning

every person who went to sleep without any provision. Later, the Sufis, rising to the challenge of the rationalist ideas of the Mu'tazilites, propounded the doctrine of *ma'arifah* or the intuitive knowledge. This, they held, was given as God's blessing to those who sincerely sought nearness to Him. Quest for nearness involved practice of *dhikr* (remembering God) through a complex of prayers and meditations associated with the reflection and recitation of the names of God mentioned in the Quran, chanted over and over again and taken to produce ecstasy. Listening to Sufi poetry and music, and falling in ecstatic states and dance, was also believed to be a vital technique of spiritual enhancement.

The early Sufis continued their criticism of extravagance and perceived injustice on the part of the rulers. Socio-economic changes and expansion of Islamic rule over vast areas and differing civilizations necessitated contextual application of Islamic law to hitherto unknown situations. This required interpretation and mastering the science of law by jurists, also known as '*ulamā*', who were called upon to give opinion (*fatwā*) and/or become *qāḍīs* (judges to dispense justice according to law). Some of the Sufis like Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī and Ḥusayn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj came to be over-ecstatic in their spiritual excitement. They are remembered as 'intoxicationists' in the love of God. Claims to intuitive knowledge, coming close to revelation to the Prophet, and practices of ecstatic spiritual methodology were seen by the state and '*ulamā*' as contravening Islamic law. In the ensuing conflict between the state and '*ulamā*' on official positions, on the one hand, and the Sufis, particularly the intoxicationists, on the other, some Sufis were made to lose their lives, becoming 'martyrs' in the eyes of many. Other Sufis pursued

what is often called the ‘sober’ path, and overtime, al-Ghazzālī’s thought tried to bring the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufi positions closer together through his emphasis on both inner sincerity and outward compliance with legal Islamic requirements.

Al-Ghazzālī’s resolution opened the way for many ‘*ulamā*’ to follow or inculcate Sufi attitudes of spiritual path coinciding with the development of Sufi *silsilahs*, with tightly knit organization revolving around a *murshid* or Shaykh (spiritual guide or mentor), usually named after the founder, and based on a definite set of principles, litanies, and forms of meditation, etc. Some of the important *silsilahs* relevant to the Indian Subcontinent have been Qādiriyyah and Suhrawardiyyah, both of them founded by persons who initially had juristic training and, therefore, were recognized as ‘*ulamā*’ as well.

The Chishtī *Silsilah* takes its root from Shaykh Abū Ishāq Shāmī who, in his later life, resided in Chisht near Herat in modern Afghanistan. Fuller articulation of the Chishtī doctrines was accomplished in India by the Chishtī Shaykhs, more notably by the leaders of Chishtī *Silsilah*. The doctrines of the *Silsilah* demanded avoidance of political authorities, for which the Chishtīs used a variety of ways that included the following: first, not accepting services under the Sultans; secondly, not accepting lands or *jāgīrs* from the Sultans, the ruling elite and other influential people; thirdly, not agreeing to visit of their *khānqāhs* (the Sufi lodges) by the Sultans; and lastly, not visiting the court of the Sultans of Delhi. Moreover, the Chishtī Shaykhs used their individual judgment in regard to three things: first, the acceptance or rejection of the cash grants or *futūḥ* items offered

by the Sultans and the *umarā'*, secondly, avoiding or admitting the *umarā'* in their company, and lastly, extending help to the Sultans/Sultanate of Delhi.

As an institution, the *Silsilah* included the Chishtī Shaykhs, their notable *khulafā'*, who were associated with the *Silsilah* through spiritual lineage, personal attendants of the Shaykh, and disciples or lay-Sufis. Institutions like the *khānqāh*, where the Chishtī Shaykhs lived along with other inmates, held assemblies, and received visitors; *langar* (the public kitchen), which fed thousands of people everyday; and *futūh* (the unsolicited charity) along with its management and distribution, cannot be isolated from a *Silsilah*, as these were part and parcel of it.

Similarly, the Sultanate of Delhi cannot be reduced to the personalities of the individual Sultans, who wielded political authority, and were the fountain-heads of the administrative structure. The Sultanate as a recognized form of government emerged as a result of historical circumstances. Conflict regarding the nature of leadership/Imamate rose early in the Muslim community. After the first four Rightly-guided/Pious Caliphs, rulership passed into dynastic caliphates, first the Umayyad one (661-750) and then the 'Abbāsīd (750-1258). When the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs began to grow weak, some military leaders asserted themselves and began to rule virtually independent of the Caliph in Baghdad. Muslim thinkers, particularly among the *Ahl al-Sunnah*, wrote several treatises to preserve the continuity and the sanctity of the institution of Caliphate, and also to take into account the reality of the weakness of the Caliph and strength of independent Sultans that had come to proliferate in the various regions of the Caliphate.

The belief that eventually came to crystallize among the thinkers and majority of the Muslims was that Caliphate (*Khilāfat*) or Imamate was taken to be an institution required by Islam as religion, and that the Muslim community was in sin if it did not have a Caliph. Al-Ghazzālī, among others, made the outstanding contribution firmly reinforcing the pivotal importance of the institution of Caliphate or Imamate, and at the same time, affirming the need for a Sultan in the structure of the state or polity. Al-Ghazzālī's theory of Imamate contained three inter-dependant components: first, the person of *khalīfah* as symbol of *Sharī'ah* and continuity in the institution of *Khilāfat* since the Prophet; secondly, the Sultan as the effective ruler/provider of environment for the practice of *Sharī'ah*; and thirdly, the '*ulamā*' to interpret the contents of *Sharī'ah*.

Some of the important Sultanates that flourished in the Muslim World and bore the marks of this triarchic theoretical position, included the Seljūqīd, the Khwārizm Shāhī, the Ghaznavid and the Ghaurid. Out of the last one grew the Delhi Sultanate, imbibing the Turco-Persian traditions of tribal leadership and succession, multiplicity of socio-economic, politico-military and religio-moral forces in decision-making, along with observance of stately mannerism. As such, the Sultanate of Delhi included important political actors including influential members of the royal family, the *umarā*', the high state officials, and the '*ulamā*'.

The 'ulamā'³ had traditionally come to represent the religious authority and leadership in Islam. The category of 'ulamā' is not without conceptual problems; after al-Ghazzālī, the differentiation between the 'ulamā' and the Sufis became blurred. The 'ulamā'-Sufi dichotomy⁴ in studies presumes that the two groups were mutually exclusive; however, a clear line of demarcation is not easy to be drawn between them, since the two categories at times overlap.⁵ Not only did the 'ulamā' belong to varied schools of *fiqh* (Muslim jurisprudence), their attitude towards the state as well as towards Sufism and the Sufis also greatly differed. Some of 'ulamā' kept themselves aloof from court life, and rejected government service, while others served at various official positions. Similarly, some of them were recognized as eminent Sufis, while others were critical of some of the Sufi doctrines and practices, more notably, the concept of *ma'arifah* (intuitive knowledge), and the practices of *samā'* (devotional Sufi music), and *raqs* (ecstatic Sufi dance), which they perceived to be negating the basic tenets of Islam. In addition to the 'ulamā' who sincerely contested these Sufi doctrines and practices, there were others who were envious of the Sufi Shaykhs owing to the public sway, which the latter came to enjoy. The hostility and friction between the *anti-Sufi* 'ulamā' and the

³ As a general term, the word 'ulamā' (plural of Arabic word 'ālim, derived from 'ilm or knowledge, which literally means a knowledgeable person) came to refer to the learned Muslims or religious scholars during the early Islamic era, which included, more specifically, the *muhaddithin* (traditionalists; experts of *aḥādīth*), *fuqahā'* (jurists, or experts of Islamic law), *muftīs* (expounders of Islamic law) and *qāḍīs* (the judges). According to Roy Mottahedeh, in the early Islamic era, the 'ulamā' formed a vaguely defined category, having a least restrictive meaning as it overlapped with a number of other categories. Moreover, it was not a distinct group, but the 'ulamā' were a category with a self-conscious identity. Idem, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 140, 142-43.

⁴ The dichotomy between 'doctor' or legislator, and 'saint', that is, the 'ulamā' and the Sufis, was first referred to by Jacques Berques, and later by Ernest Gellner. Jacques Berques, *Structures sociales du Haut-Atlas* (Social Structure of the High Atlas) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955), pp. 315-22, and Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. 8.

⁵ Regarding the leadership of the 'ulamā', Mottahedeh identifies three distinct but overlapping categories, and maintains that some of the 'ulamā' were respected as leaders by all three categories: the categories defined by religious knowledge, by Sufism, and by non-Sufi pietism. Idem, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, p. 148.

Sufis had become more pronounced given the fact that many of these ‘*ulamā*’ served at various state positions, and were, therefore, able to influence the attitude of the rulers towards the Sufis.

In the Sultanate of Delhi, there existed a symbiotic relationship between the political and religious authorities, the latter being represented by the ‘*ulamā*’. Many of them held the official title of *Shaykh al-Islām* (official in charge of the ecclesiastical affairs of the Sultanate), and filled important positions, such as *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr* or *Ṣadr-i Jahān* (official responsible for religious and judicial affairs), and *Qāḍī-i Mamālik* (the chief *qāḍī*, head of juridical authority). In this way, the ‘*ulamā*’ directly influenced the attitude of the state and the Sultans towards the Sufis. Though some of the ‘*ulamā*’ were sympathetic to the Sufis, many of them were critical of the latter, and included those who sincerely contested the Sufi beliefs and practices, as well as those who were ill-disposed towards the Sufi Shaykhs owing to the latter’s popularity among the people. It was on the behest of such ‘*ulamā*’ that some Sufis were made to appear in court for public debate on the practice of *samā*’, while others were punished by the state.

In the present study, the role of the ‘*ulamā*’ on official positions, or as a state actor, has been examined with reference to their attitude towards the Chishtī Sufis. Since most of the state-allied ‘*ulamā*’ were anti-Sufism, therefore, the two sub-categories of the ‘*ulamā*’, the pro-Sufism and anti-Sufism, are suggested.

During the first three or four decades after the introduction of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India, and its interaction with the Sultanate of Delhi, the early Chishtī Shaykhs carved out an independent space, an environment for independent action and practice of Chishtī principles, free from the interference of the state, for the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Sultanate of Delhi. The Chishtī position to keep a distance from the state was because of the state's perceived propensity to negatively affect a Sufi's quest for nearness to God, which was believed to be principally promoted by love for God through *dhikr* or recollecting/remembering God, *samā'* or listening to devotional music and Sufi poetry, and love for His creation. The ideal of nearness to God was seen to be negatively affected by contact with rulers; particularly when such were seen as impious, usurpers and unjust. The Chishtīs sought freedom in their spiritual pursuits in the principal methods that they had adopted, including the principle of minimal contact with rulers. In concrete terms, the Chishtī *Silsilah* resisted any intervention in their *khānqāhs*, where they led a communal life, and in the methods they adopted for spiritual enhancement, including the doctrine and practice of *samā'* and its accompanying *raqs*, which was generally disapproved of by the '*ulamā'*'.

The Chishtī *Khānqāhs*, generally referred to as *jamā' atkhānahs*, were not only the physical manifestation of the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, they also provided an environment for free and unhindered practice of Chishtī principles. Though these *khānqāhs* were situated within the political confines of the Sultanate of Delhi, they did not form a part of it, as they were a world of their own. An egalitarian atmosphere prevailed in these *khānqāhs*, as people belonging to any tribe, caste, creed and colour,

and having any age or social status in the Indian society were treated alike there. In fact, the Chishtī traditions emphasized equality, fraternity and simplicity in contrast to the attitudes of the ruling elite, who's emphasis was on the notions of racial and ethnic superiority and cultural exclusivity. Moreover, the Chishtī traditions of tolerance created a climate of opinion in these *khānqāhs*, where unorthodox and unconventional religious beliefs, expressions and rituals could be heard and practiced without persecution. In other words, the *khānqāhs* were the places where people with non-conformist behaviour, such as the *qalandars* and *mazjūbs*, could live without fear. In short, in the less tolerant social environment of the Delhi Sultanate, these *khānqāhs* provided a breathing space to the individuals having an inclination towards non-conformism in established Islamic morals and practices. Thus, the space in both physical and doctrinal sense was crucial for translating the Chishtī principles into practice.

In studying the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi, the argument is that the relationship between these two institutions can be understood by taking 'space' as central to their interaction. The space was important for both the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate; for the adherents of the *Silsilah* to freely practice the Chishtī principles, and for the Sultanate for reasons of the perceived political importance of the space, and/or personal and religious/spiritual considerations of the Sultans. Therefore, the space becomes central to the relationship between the two institutions, the behaviour or action of each being grounded in their respective traditions, values and contemporary perceptions of socio-political challenges.

It appears that the relationship between the two can be understood by looking into the process of carving out the space by the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Delhi Sultanate, expansion of the space, attempts by the state to encroach on the space, its preservation and defense by the Chishtīs, and negotiation between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate over the extent or limits of the space. By carving out space in the Sultanate, it is implied that the early Chishtī Shaykhs established or laid down principles, practice of which would afford freedom of action. Expansion of the space means further dissemination of the Chishtī principles and more pronounced practice of them in the Sultanate. Encroachment on the space by the state implies coercive pressures on the *Silsilah* to compromise the extent of the practice of its principles, while negotiation refers to adjusting or redefining the limits of the independent space of the *Silsilah* in view of the state demands.

Making use of this framework, the present study attempts to explore the principles which guided the conduct of the Chishtīs vis-à-vis the Sultanate, and discern a pattern to the interaction between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi.

Methodology

Sufism, a distinct branch of religious/Islamic studies, has been a subject of interest to scholars of religious studies as well as sociologists, anthropologists and historians. They have acknowledged the problems and limitations in undertaking a social-scientific study of Sufism. For instance, the approach of the Western orientalists, maintains Austin, is “almost completely lacking in any appreciation of the experiential flavour of Sufism so

essential for any proper understanding.”⁶ He also points out the problems in the ‘universalist’ approach to Sufism, which regards Islam and Sufism as a particular manifestation of universal human aspirations towards the supernatural and spiritual. Particularly, anthropologists and sociologists “tend to study all religions as universally primitive and outmoded attempts on the part of pre-scientific man to comprehend the universe and his place in it... [T]hey reject the validity and truth of all religions, except as interesting specimens for ‘objective’ scrutiny.”⁷ Baldick points to the similar problem when he writes that some authors tend to reject “history in order to effect an alleged reproduction of the psychological states attributed to the believers studied.”⁸ Cornell also recognizes the problems with the Durkheimian, Weberian and neo-Weberian approaches to Muslim ‘Sainthood’, and he finds them reductive.⁹ He finds that many phenomena in Sufism such as miracles and paranormal phenomena are inherently improvable, and thus, lie beyond objective verification.¹⁰ Ernst and Lawrence also recognize that most of the scholarship on Sufism follows an “outdated style of intellectual history, the goal of which is to press Sufi narratives into the service of a narrowly positivist agenda, in which only

⁶ William Stoddart [‘Imrān Yaḥyā], *Sufism: The Mystical Doctrines and Methods of Islam* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1999 rpt., first published 1981), see Foreword by R. W. J. Austin, p. 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸ Julian Baldick differentiates between the American and the European perspectives by stating that in Europe, ‘the history of religions’ means a sub-discipline of history, history as applied to religions, which analyzes the patterns or configurations as they pass from one religion to another, or from one period of religious history to the next. In other words, the modes of change in these patterns are examined, rather than the events. *Idem*, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1989), p. 5.

⁹ Vincent J. Cornell, however, acknowledges the contributions of scholars working on European/Christian Sainthood, such as Delehay, Weinstein and Bell, and particularly Deloos, who developed the new discipline of ‘sociology of sainthood’ by undertaking a historical-sociological study of sainthood, combining the historical approach with the approach developed by the French *Annales* School of social history. *Idem*, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), see Introduction, pp. xxx-xxxiii.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xliii.

scientifically determined facts are allowed entry.”¹¹ Acknowledging the problems and limitations in undertaking a social-scientific study of Sufism and related phenomena, the present study broadly employs a historical approach, while the use of concepts of sociology and anthropology has been avoided.

The present study employs the following approaches. The descriptive-analytical approach is historical/chronological in the present study. In other words, it employs a chronological scheme in order to examine the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi, though it periodizes their relationship in various phases in a thematic manner.

The work also employs the methodologies of narrative history as well. The historical narrative in the study traces the origin and development of Sufism in Persia, Central Asia and Iraq, and the advent of Sufism in India. It also briefly narrates the gradual emergence of Muslim rule in India, a protracted process stretching from seventh to twelfth century, and its consolidation in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In terms of arrangement or organization of data, the present study differs from both the dynastic histories and popular hagiographies: the former employ an annalistic scheme of periodization, and arrange data in historical periods based on dynasties, while the latter organize data according to the Sufis, or the major events in the life of a Sufi. In

¹¹ Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 48.

contrast to them, the present study arranges data in terms of the different phases in the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi.

All the dates in the study are in Christian Era (CE) or A.D., except where alternative *Hijrah* dates have been indicated, where pertinent, with A.H. Moreover, the names of places that are common, such as Delhi, Ajmer and Makran, and non-English words which are commonly found in English dictionaries such as Sultan and Sufi, have not been transliterated.

Note on Terms and their Translation

When a word is translated from one language to another, it is important that the translation must be faithful to the meaning of the word translated. Since all languages contain their specific world-views, the task of translation becomes challenging. It gets further complicated when concepts are to be translated, particularly when the concepts are religious, since a small difference in meaning may create problems in explanation and analysis.¹² For instance, terms such as saint and sainthood carry distinctive connotations, and one is liable to confuse them with the Christian concept of sainthood, therefore, the terms Sufi and Sufism have been used in the present study instead. According to the Christian concept of sainthood, the holiness of saints is recognized by the Roman Catholic process of canonization. On the contrary, there is no such practice in Islam, as the Sufi Shaykhs do not need any formal recognition of their spirituality from any authority. Similarly, sociological concepts such as Weber's concept of Charisma (often

¹² For problems of translation from one language into another, see Joseph F. Graham, ed., *Difference in Translation* (New York and London: Ithaca, 1985).

mistakenly used as an English equivalent for *barakah*) have also been avoided. To avoid confusion, certain Arabic and Persian terms have been left untranslated, such as *umarā'*, *khalifah*, *khulafā'*, and *sajjādah-nashīn*, but briefly explained in the text or footnotes where mentioned for the first time, as well as explained in the glossary. However, terms which have found way in common parlance as well as standard dictionaries of English language, such as Sultan, Sultana, Sultanate, Shaykh, Sufi, Islam, Imamate, Quran, Sunnah, and Raja have neither been translated, nor italicized.

Note on Sources

The primary sources consulted for the study may be classified into two broad categories: the historiographical accounts envisaging a statist discourse, and the vast variety of Sufi literature, which offers a non-statist perspective. These two categories of sources and their approaches have been critically reviewed in the following sections respectively:

Section I Court Chronicles: The 'Statist' Historiographical Narratives

The primary sources available for studying the state and politics in the thirteenth and fourteenth century India mostly comprise of works which are court chronicles. Almost all of the historians of medieval India¹³ were associated with the court, and held high positions in the Sultanate of Delhi. Although some of these works were written with an explicit historiographical purpose, others were composed to please and win the favours of

¹³ The chronological construct of 'medieval India', commonly used as convenient label for referring to a certain period in Indian history, is not without conceptual problems. For a critical review and analysis, see Tanvir Anjum, "Temporal Divides: A Critical Review of the Major Schemes of Periodization in Indian History", *Journal of Social Sciences*, Government College University, Faisalabad, vol. 1, no. 1 (July 2004), pp. 32-50, esp. 36-41.

the Sultans of Delhi. That was why most of them were dedicated to the various Sultans of Delhi, who were the patrons of their authors.

These works were written in Persian—the official language of the Court of Delhi. They are mainly narrative and descriptive in content, with occasional analyses of some historical developments. Not only do they lack objectivity, their accounts are deficient in systematic critical analysis of the medieval state policies, institutions and practices. Moreover, the focus of these works remains the political history of the Sultanate, with the Sultan placed at the center of the stage, and the whole narrative is woven around him.

These historiographical accounts envisage a statist discourse since the preferences, system of thought and beliefs, and political ideals of the Delhi Sultans in particular, and other political actors such as the Sultan's close associates, *umarā'* and influential high state officials in general, are in sharp focus. Contrarily, the perceptions, aspirations, problems and conditions of the common people hardly find any mention in these accounts. Thus, the state-centric approach, or the elite perspective of these works, fails to provide a holistic picture of the medieval Indian state, economy and society, particularly from the view-point of the non-elite or the common people.

The reductionism in the approach of the statist chronicles was more in line with the ancient Persian traditions of historiography. Writing about the Persian historiographical traditions, Nizami observes that the historians of pre-Islamic Sassanian Persia focused on the pomp and show of the court, the achievements of the Emperors and

the history of their conquests, which was generally aimed at the glorification of the kings. On the contrary, they considered any reference to the common people or their problems as derogatory to the art of history-writing. In this way, the 'history of the age' was converted into the 'history of the kings.'¹⁴

Some historians of the Sultanate era like Minhāj, Baranī and 'Afif were closely associated with the various regimes in the Sultanate of Delhi. The accounts of these historians, particularly those pertaining to the historical developments of the reign of their patron-kings, cannot be accepted uncritically. For instance, Minhāj al-Sirāj Juzjānī, the author of *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, held all important offices including those of *qāḍī*, *khaṭīb* (literally meaning the one who delivers sermons, the preacher) and *imām* (prayer leader) simultaneously, was the *qāḍī* of Delhi under Sultan Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish. The work was composed in 1256 during the reign of Sultan Naṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, to whom Minhāj dedicated his work. Similarly, Baranī, the renowned fourteenth-century political theorist and historian, and the author of *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, remained a courtier of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq for nearly seventeen years. The work was composed in 1359 during the reign of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq, to whom it was dedicated as well. Likewise, Shams Sirāj 'Afif, the author of *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, was a frequent attendant at the court of Sultan Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq. The work was composed during the reign of Sultan Fīrūz, to whom 'Afif dedicated it as well.

¹⁴ K. A. Nizami, *On Sources and Source Material (Being Volume One of Historical Studies—Indian and Islamic)* (Delhi: Idārah-'i Adabiyāt-i Dellī, 1995), pp. 3-5.

A few court historians have partly covered the historical developments of the Sultanate era. One such example is Amīr Khusrau, who composed *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*, which is an official history of the military campaigns of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī. It highlights the military successes of the Sultan, while ignoring the defeats the Sultanate's army had to suffer in the battlefields. It must be remembered that Amīr Khusrau was a court poet of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī, and one cannot expect an objective account from him.

There is another group of historians who were once associated with the Sultans of Delhi or lived under the Sultanate of Delhi. Later, in the mid-fourteenth century, they migrated to other regions of the Indian Subcontinent where the provincial governors of the Delhi Sultanate had declared independence, and had established their independent kingdoms. The objectivity of the historical narratives of these historians, who sought the favours of the so-called rebels of the Sultanate of Delhi, is somewhat blurred as they tend to glorify their patrons and diminish the achievements of their contemporary Sultans of Delhi. Two major historical works which fall in this category are 'Iṣāmī's *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*.

Mawlānā 'Iṣāmī composed his poetical work *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn (Shāhnāmah-'i Hind)* in 1348 during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. However, 'Iṣāmī's family migrated to Dawlatabād in Deccan when the Sultan established his second capital in Dawlatabād. Though 'Iṣāmī's grandfather, 'Izz al-Dīn 'Iṣāmī, had served as a military commander under the Sultans of Delhi, he got himself associated with the Bahmanī

Kingdom of Deccan, and dedicated his work to Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥasan (Bahman Shāh), the founder of the Bahmanī Kingdom, who had rebelled against Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.

The famous Moroccan traveler, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah served under Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq for some time. Then he lost the favour with the Sultan, but soon after that their relations were normalized. However, later Ibn Baṭṭūṭah went to Ma‘bar, which was under the control of the rebels of the Delhi Sultanate, and married a sister of the wife of Jalāl al-Dīn Aḥsan Shāh, who became the first king of Ma‘bar. The opinion of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah had become adverse owing to his close connection and relation with the rebels of the Delhi Sultanate.

As for the historical accounts of near contemporary and later sources such as Yahyā ibn Aḥmad Sirhindī’s *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, Abū ‘l-Qāsim Farishtah’s *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, Abū ‘l-Faḍl’s *Akbarnāmah*, Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad Bakhshī’s *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, and Badāyūnī’s *Muntakhib al-Tawārīkh*, they have largely depended on the above-mentioned contemporary sources. They also provide some additional historical data and explanations, which cannot be substantiated from any contemporary sources. Such additional information, which is largely based on hearsay, cannot be uncritically accepted since it does not stand the test of the principles of historical criticism.

In short, the above-mentioned sources, which present historiographical accounts from a statist perspective, offer a piecemeal view of the political and social realities of the

thirteenth and fourteenth century India. The frames of reference employed in these works invariably remain the state and state institutions like kingship, army, and the *umarā'*. Largely descriptive and narrative in content, these works lack in systematic analysis of historical developments of the past. The selective description of historical facts and the subjective interpretation of data further mar the historical worth of these works.

The court chronicles, or the statist historiographical accounts, only partially discuss the relationship of various Sultans of Delhi with the Sufis, and provide very scanty information about the Sufis. However, one finds a plethora of information about the Sufis in the Sufi literature, which offers an altogether different picture of the past.

Section II Sufi Literature: The 'Non-statist' Accounts

Contrary to the above-mentioned state-centric historical works, there is a plethora of Sufi literature produced in medieval India. It is interesting to note that the Persian Sufi hagiographical literature produced in India is more than the literature of this genre produced in Persia and Central Asia combined.¹⁵ It offers a non-statist or a non-elitist perspective of the medieval Indian polity, particularly highlighting the religious traditions and systems of thought and beliefs, as well as the culture and society at large. The vast amount of Sufi literature presents an insider's vision, as it was composed by either the Sufis themselves, or by their disciples and devotees. There is a historical disconnect between the English-language western scholarship on Chishtī Sufism, and the Persian hagiographical tradition of the Chishtīs. The former provides an outsider vision, while the latter furnishes an insider's vision. There is tension between the outsider point of view

¹⁵ Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 48.

and the insider's vision, yet ignoring either one of these perspectives results in either 'advocacy or reductionism.'¹⁶

1. Classification of the Sufi Literature

Sufi literature has been classified in various categories by different historians and scholars of Sufism.¹⁷ The broad categories include the following:

1. *Malfūzāt* (the collection of conversations and discourses of the Sufis compiled by their disciples)
2. *Maktūbāt* (the collected correspondence of the Sufis)
3. *Dīwān* (collection of poetry composed by the Sufis containing Sufi themes)
4. Treatises written by the Sufis on themes related to Sufism
5. *Tadhkirāt* (compilation of anecdotes and biographical accounts of the Sufis composed by the disciples or devotees of the Sufis; often referred to as hagiographical literature)
6. *Ishārāt* (instructional treatises written by the Sufis)

However, it is important to bear in mind that these categories cannot be taken to be mutually exclusive; they may overlap in some cases, as at times a single piece of Sufi literature may fall in more than one of the above-mentioned categories. For instance, Bruce Lawrence points out that *Siyar al-Awliyā'* (Biographies of the Sufis), written by Amīr Khūrd Kirmānī, is neither a *tadhkirah*, as its title suggests, nor a collection of

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For instance, P. M. Currie has classified the Sufi literature into four different genres, namely *malfūzāt*, *maktūbāt*, mystical treatises and poems written by the Shaykh, and *tadhkirāt*. Idem, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'in al-dīn Chishtī of Ajmer* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 20, see details on pp. 20-26. According to Riazul Islam, the Sufi sources fall into three broad divisions: (i) treatises, (ii) *tadhkirahs*, and (iii) the *malfūzāt-maktūbāt* literature. Idem, *Sufism in South Asia: Impact on Fourteenth Century Muslim Society* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. xix.

malḡūzāt, but “an untidy amalgam of both literary genres.”¹⁸ Therefore, while classifying the Sufi literature, one needs to be mindful of this.

2. Issues and Problems in Sufi Literature

Notwithstanding the historical worth and usefulness of the Sufi literature, its study is not without problems and issues. The major problems and issues in this regard pertain to the question of authenticity of Sufi texts, and the focus and contents of Sufi literature.

(i) Authenticity of Sufi Texts

A crucial problem in studying the Sufi literature is that of authenticity of certain texts, particularly the *malḡūzāt* attributed to the early Chishtī Sufis. Some historians and scholars of Sufism have rejected them as apocryphal, whereas others have critically accepted them. These so-called apocryphal and spurious works, allegedly written by the eminent Sufis on themes related to Sufism, not only abound in number, they are also most commonly available.

For instance, the following *malḡūzāt* are generally considered to be latter-day fabrications by many historians and scholars of Sufism: (i) *Anīs al-Arwāḡ* (*malḡūz* of Shaykh ‘Uthmān Hārwanī collected by Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer), (ii) *Dalīl al-‘Ārifīn* (*malḡūz* of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn collected by Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī), (iii) *Fawā’id al-Sālikīn* (*malḡūz* of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī preserved by Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Mas‘ūd alias Bābā Farīd), (iv) *Rāḡat al-Qulūb* (*malḡūz*

¹⁸ Bruce B. Lawrence, *Notes from a Distant Flute: The Extant Literature of Pre-Mughal Indian Sufism* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978), p. 31.

of Bābā Farīd compiled by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'), (v) *Asrār al-Awliyā'* (*malfūz* of Bābā Farīd collected by Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq), (vi) *Afdal al-Fawā'id* (*malfūz* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' composed by Amīr Khusrau), and (vii) *Miftāḥ al-'Āshiqīn* (*malfūz* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd *Chirāgh-i Dehlī*).

In addition, certain *dīwāns* or collections of poetry have also been attributed to the early Chishtī Shaykhs, the authenticity of which is considered to be dubious. These include, amongst others, *dīwāns* attributed to Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn of Ajmer, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Bābā Farīd. Similarly, some *maktūbāt* or collections of letters have also been attributed to the early Chishtī Shaykhs such as *Maktūbāt-i Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Ajmērī*, and *Ṣaḥā'if al-Sulūk* allegedly written by Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. In a likewise manner, some instructional treatises or *Ishārāt* have also been attributed to them. These include, for instance, Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn's treatise titled *Ganj al-Asrār* (The Treasure of Secrets), written at the behest of his preceptor, Khwājah 'Uthmān Hārwanī, for the guidance of Sultan Iletmish, and *Uṣūl al-Ṭarīqah* composed by Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī Nāgaurī, the *khalīfah* of Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn of Ajmer. The latter is a question-answer handbook.

Regarding these spurious Sufī texts, Bruce Lawrence observes that these works have two recurrent characteristics: (i) they were written at an early date, and appeared probably in response to *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, as they awkwardly imitate it; and (ii) although the appearance of spurious *dīwāns* and *awrāds* (collection of prayers) seems random, the forged *malfūzāt* are sequential and complete in their patterning. However, Lawrence

concedes that these apocryphal works do have “incidental value for estimating the mood of popular piety in 14th century Delhi... Yet on the whole, they seriously distort the historical image of the saints whom they awkwardly attempt to eulogize.”¹⁹

The issue of historical authenticity of the Sufi literature is further complicated owing to the fact that the later-day medieval hagiographers heavily relied on these spurious and apocryphal works, which in turn cast doubt on the historical value of their hagiographies. Therefore, the accounts of Amīr Khūrd’s *Siyar al-Awliyā*,²⁰ Jamālī’s *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*,²¹ and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlavī’s *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*,²² which have relied on these inauthentic works, become unreliable as well. These works contradict each other quite often, and one finds a single incident variously narrated by their authors. In fact, these works heavily rely on oral traditions of historiography, and ignoring the principles of historical criticism, cite events without verifying their historical authenticity. Thus, while studying the Sufi literature, one needs to be cautious, and mindful of the fabrications in it.

(ii) Focus and Contents of Sufi Literature

Another crucial issue in Sufi literature pertains to its focus and content. Historians have pointed out that there is a frequent occurrence of hyperbolic statements and overstated records of various events from the lives of the Sufis in texts on Sufism. Eaton, for

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

²⁰ For a review of the literary style and historical value of *Siyar al-Awliyā*, see Mahmud Husain Siddiqui, *The Memoirs of Sufis Written in India (Reference to Kashaf-ul-Mahjub, Siyar-ul-Auliya and Siyar-ul-Arifin)* (Baroda: Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, 1979), pp. 56-81.

²¹ For a review on the literary style and historical value of *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, see ibid., pp. 82-98.

²² For a brief review, see ‘Alīm Ashraf Khān, *Hayāt-o ‘Ilmī Khidmāt-i Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlavī* (New Delhi: Islamic Wonders Bureau, 2001), pp. 112-14.

instance, indicates that the hagiographical literature dealing with the biographies of the Sufis are fraught with ‘laudatory embellishments’, and often indulge in ‘fanciful miracle-mongering’.²³ It has been suggested that these works often portray larger-than-life images of Sufi personages. While studying Sufi literature, it must be remembered that these works, particularly the *tadhkirāt* or the biographical/hagiographical literature, reveal the world-view of the biographers/hagiographers, and help us understand and appreciate how the people associated with the Sufis viewed the Sufi Shaykhs, what fascinates them the most in the life and achievements of these Sufis, and what they want to inculcate in the readers of these works.

Nonetheless, the pre-occupation of the biographers and hagiographers with the supernatural attributes of the Sufis and the display of their miraculous powers, tends to diminish the contribution of the Sufis in social sphere as active human actors. Moreover, owing to the narrow focus of these works, many important dimensions of the roles of the Sufis remain ignored, such as the relationship of the Sufis with the court and political authorities. That is why these works tangentially treat the views and attitude of the Sufis regarding political power. Nevertheless, this is not to deny the historical worth of the Sufi literature, particularly of the *maḥfūzāt* genre, which serves as an important source of medieval Indian history.

²³ Richard Maxwell Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur 1300-1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. xviii.

3. Historical Value of *Malfūzāt* Literature

Malfūzāt constitute a distinct genre of Sufi literature.²⁴ The term *malfūzāt* is the plural of *malfūz*, which literally means “words spoken”.²⁵ *Malfūzāt* are the compilations of Sufi discourses or table-talks held in the assemblies of the Sufi masters, which are recorded by their disciples. Though *malfūz* literature first appeared outside India in the twelfth century,²⁶ *malfūz*-writing in India began during the first decade of the fourteenth century. It was popularized in India by Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’. Sijzī compiled the *malfūz* of his preceptor in the fourteenth century, with the title of *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*. It records the conversations of the Shaykh from 1307-22 A.D. It was followed by other *malfūz* collections such as *Surūr al-Ṣudūr*, the *malfūz* of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī compiled by Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Maḥmūd (the paternal grandson of the Shaykh), *Durr-i Niẓāmī* and *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, the two *malfūzāt* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn collected by his disciples, 'Alī ibn Maḥmūd Jāndār and Muḥammad Jamāl Qiwām respectively, and *Khayr al-Majālis* and *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, the *malfūzāt* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, compiled by his disciples, Ḥamīd Qalandar and Saiyyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Bandahnawāz Gēsūdirāz respectively.

²⁴ For details of their meaning, significance and evaluation, see Akhlāq Ḥusayn Dehlavī, *Ā'inā-i Malfūzāt: Fawā'id al-Sālikīn, Asrār Awliyā', Rāḥat al-Qulūb* (Delhi: Kutubkhānah-'i Anjuman-i Taraqqī-'i Urdu, 1983), pp. 28-95. See also Riyāḍ al-Islām, “*Ṣūfiyāna Adab kē Liyē ek Minhāj-i Tahqīq kī Darūrat*” (The Need for Methodology for Studying Sufi Literature), in *Taṣawwuf Barr-i Ṣaghīr Mēḡ: Proceedings of the South Asia Regional Seminar on Manuscripts on Taṣawwuf Held in 1985* (Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1992), pp. 468-86.

²⁵ K. A. Nizami, “Historical Significance of the *Malfuz* Literature of Medieval India”, in *On History and Historians of Medieval India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1983), p. 163.

²⁶ For instance, Abū Sa'id Abū 'l-Khayr's two *malfūzāt* titled *Hālāt-o Sukhanān-i Shaykh Abu Sa'id Faḍl-Allāh ibn Abī 'l-Khayr al-Mayhanī*, compiled by Muḥammad ibn Abū Raū'f Luṭf-Allāh in 540 A.H./1145-46 A.D., and *Asrār al-Tawḥīd fī Maqāmāt Abī Sa'id*, compiled by Muḥammad ibn Munawwar in 574 A.H./1178 A.D., appeared in the twelfth century. Similarly, we also find *Malfūzāt-i Najm al-Dīn Kubrā* compiled by one of his disciples.

The *malfūz* literature serves as an important source for reconstructing the history of medieval India. It is an authentic source of information for the social and cultural life, and the religious thought and behaviour during the medieval period. Nizami observes:

Malfuz writing is one of the greatest literary achievements of medieval Hind-Pakistan. Through these records of conversations we can have a glimpse of the medieval society in all its fullness, if not in all its perfection—the moods and tensions of the common man, the inner yearnings of his soul, the religious thought at its higher and lower levels, the popular customs and above all the problems of the people.²⁷

Nizami underscores the need to utilize the *malfūz* literature produced in medieval India in order to reconstruct the history of that era. These alternative sources of history can serve “both as a corrective of the impressions created by the court chronicles and as a source of information for the religious, cultural and literary movements of the period.”²⁸

Similarly, according to Desai, hagiographical works, including the *malfūzāt*, are not only ‘indispensable primary sources’ for constructing medieval history, they are in a sense more important than chronicles. While discussing the value and significance of ten different *malfūzāt* for writing the history of medieval Gujrat, he contends that they contain “valuable material about the life of the people right from royalty, nobility and saintly establishments down to traders, artisans, peasants, soldiers and lower strata of society.”²⁹ In addition to providing useful information about the life of the common

²⁷ Nizami, *On Sources and Source Material*, p. 69. In this work, Nizami discusses the value of three *malfūzāt* of Chishtī Sufis in three separate articles, viz., “*Durar-i-Nizami*—a unique but less-known *malfuz* of Shaikh Nizam-u’d-din Auliya”, “*Sarur-u’s-Sudur*, a *malfuz* of Shaikh Hamid-u’d-din of Nagour”, and “*Ahsan-al-Aqwal*, a *malfuz* of Shaikh Burhan-u’d-din Gharib” in chaps. 4, 6, and 7 respectively, pp. 40-55, 63-68, and 69-73.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

²⁹ Ziyauddin A. Desai, “Persian Sources of the Social and Cultural History of Medieval Gujrat”, in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, eds. Muzaffar Alam, Francoise

people, these works also constitute a worthwhile source for political and administrative history. Desai concludes that

... these works help conjure up a medieval rural world in all its fullness. Apart from the spiritual and religious personalities, and discussions on mystic and ethical topics, we come to know of social customs, religious ceremonies, manners, prejudices and predilections, modes of behaviour and address, food- and dress-habits, games and pastimes, prevalent among different sections of society.³⁰

Eaton contends that such works are generally “free from miracle-mongering or other forms of embellishments... [and] provide perhaps the most candid pictures of how Sufis lived.”³¹ This is truer regarding the Chishtī *malḡūzāt* as compared to those of the Suhrawardī Sufis, as the former are not as much fraught with miracles and supernatural phenomena as the latter ones, and one does not find other-worldly atmosphere in them. In the opinion of Nizami, even if the miracles of earlier Sufis find some place in the Chishtī *malḡūzāt*, “the purpose is to bring out some higher and nobler principle of social life, rather than to attract popular imagination to supernatural stories.”³² Another important characteristic of these *malḡūzāt* is the use of anecdotes in them, which occupies a central position in Chishtī pedagogical methodology.³³ These anecdotes also reveal the views, preferences, and proclivities of the narrators (the compilers) of the *malḡūzāt* as well as the Chishtī Sufis.

‘Nalini’ Delvoye and Marc Gaborieau (New Delhi: Manohar for Centre de Sciences Humaines, 2000), pp. 394, 399.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 400.

³¹ Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, p. xviii.

³² Nizami, *On History and Historians of Medieval India*, p. 166.

³³ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, chap. 1, “Towards a Methodology of Sufic Studies: Case Study of Anecdotes”, pp. 1-67.

Nonetheless, these works have long remained unexplored or underutilized. Mohammad Habib was the first Indian historian who utilized this huge mass of Sufi literature for historiographical purposes. Later, these *malḡūzāt* were utilized by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami of Aligarh and Saiyyid Ḥasan ‘Askarī of Patna for writing the history of medieval India. Moreover, Muhammad Aslam, who has critically reviewed twenty-nine varied *malḡūzāt* produced in India in his work *Malḡūzātī Adab kī Tarikhī Ahammiyyat* (The Historical Significance of *Malḡūz* Literature), has shown how these sources help reconstruct an alternative version of medieval Indian history.

Thus, while working on the Sufi-state relationship, one has to deal with two contrasting discourses. If one type of literary sources is state-centric, the other one is Sufi-centric. In other words, if the Sultan is placed at the centre of the statist and elitist discourse, and the whole narrative is woven around him, the same position is occupied by the Sufi Shaykhs in the Sufi literature, where the narrative revolves around one individual. Caught up between these two sets of contrasting literary traditions, one has to find a balance between them without privileging any particular discourse.

Organization of the Study

The study is divided into six chapters. After introduction, the first chapter, “Sufism, its Development, and Sufis’ Relationship with the State,” attempts to explore the meaning, origin and evolution of Sufism, and delineate its cardinal doctrines and institutionalization of major Sufi practices. It also seeks to explain the causes behind the

rapid popularization of the Sufi movement among the Muslims, and investigates the relationship of the early Sufis with the various political authorities.

The second chapter, “Emergence of Muslim Rule in India, and Political Authority in the Delhi Sultanate”, deals with the gradual emergence of Muslim rule in India as a result of eastward expansion of the Umayyad and the ‘Abbāsīd Empires. In addition to discussion on the foundation of the Sultanate of Delhi in the first decade of the thirteenth century, it also focuses on the patterns of political authority that emerged in the Sultanate of Delhi during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The third chapter, “Chishtī *Silsilah* in India, and Carving out its Space in the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1236),” studies the emergence of Chishtī *Silsilah* in the then Persia, and the attitude of the early Chishtīs outside India towards political power. After briefly discussing the advent of Sufism in India and the subsequent introduction of the Chishtīyah there, it examines how both the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi consolidated themselves under their respective founders in the ensuing decades. In addition, it also investigates how the Chishtī Sufis carved out an independent space for their *Silsilah* in the Delhi Sultanate, and discusses the relationship of the early Indian Chishtī Sufis with the Sultans of Delhi and with those ‘*ulamā*’ who were holding official positions in the Sultanate. The year 1206 marks the establishment of the Sultanate, while both Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer and Sultan Shams al-Dīn Iltmish died in the year 1236.

The fourth chapter, “Expansion and Preservation of the Space of the *Silsilah* in the Sultanate (1236-1325),” explores how the eminent Chishtī Shaykhs, Bābā Farīd and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’, expanded the space of their *Silsilah* that was carved out by their spiritual ancestors within the political confines of the Sultanate. It also discusses how the notable *khulafā’* of Bābā Farīd tried to preserve the traditions of the *Silsilah*. In 1236, Bābā Farīd assumes the leadership of the Chishtī *Silsilah* after the demise of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn, whereas after Iletmish’s demise in the same year, his family started ruling the Sultanate. The year 1325 marks the demise of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’, the spiritual successor of Bābā Farīd, as well as Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, the founder of the Tughluq Dynasty.

The fifth chapter, “State’s Attempts at Encroachment on the Space of the *Silsilah*, and its Defense (1325-1351),” analyzes the shift in the state policy towards the Sufis under Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, when the state tried to encroach on the space of the *Silsilah*. While doing so, it explores the religious and political ideals and policies of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, including his attitude towards the ‘*ulamā’* and the Sufis in general, and investigates the relationship of the Sultan with the contemporary Chishtī Shaykhs. Moreover, it also assesses the impact of the state’s policies on the relationship between the state and the Chishtī *Silsilah*. In 1325, after the demise of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’, the Chishtī leadership was passed on to Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, whereas after the death of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, his son Muḥammad ibn Tughluq ascended the throne of Delhi, and ruled till his death in 1351. His reign ushered a new chapter in the relationship of the Sultanate and the Sufis in general, and those of

the Chishtī *Silsilah* in particular, as the state policy towards the Sufis underwent a radical shift, and the relationship witnessed stresses and strains.

The sixth and the final chapter, “Preservation and Negotiation of the Space of the *Silsilah* (1351-1398),” deals with the policy of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq towards the Sufis in general, and the Chishtī Shaykhs in particular, as well as the relationship of the Chishtī *Silsilah* with the state after Fīrūz. It also studies the attitude of the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs towards the state and political power, as some of them negotiated the autonomous space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* with the state. The year 1351 marks the death of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and the accession of Sultan Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq to the throne of Delhi, whereas the year 1398 marks the migration of Khwājah Bandahnawāz Gēsūdirāz, the Chishtī leader after Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, to Deccan shortly before the invasion of Taimūr in northern India. The chapter also briefly discusses the relationship between the Khwājah and the Sultans of Bahmanī Kingdom in Deccan, where the former lived till his death in 1422.

The conclusion and bibliography are followed by a glossary of selected Arabic, Persian and Urdu terms. In addition, four appendices on the spiritual genealogy of notable Chishtī Shaykhs in India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a timeline indicating important developments in the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Delhi Sultanate during the two centuries, a list of real names and titles of the Delhi Sultans and the Chishtī Shaykhs, and the genealogy of the descendants of Bābā Farīd, have also been attached.

CHAPTER 1

Sufism, its Development, and Sufis' Relationship with the State

Mysticism is a universal phenomenon, which refers to a streak or a current that runs through many great religious traditions of the world, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Hellenism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In Islam, this tradition is referred to as Sufism or *taṣawwuf*. Originating from Quranic injunctions and Prophetic Traditions (*ahādith*), including the sayings and deeds of the Prophet (PBUH), Sufism as a distinct movement acquired its specific contours at a later stage. The popularity of the Sufi movement accompanied with the crystallization of a set of Sufi doctrines and practices was far from being an abrupt development. The growth of Sufism into a fully-developed movement with institutionalized practices was the result of a protracted process stretching over centuries, during which it proliferated over the length and breadth of the Muslim lands.¹ But from its very inception, Sufism had a problematic relationship with the Muslim establishment—with both the custodians of political and religious authorities. The ruling elite, which had monopolized political power, were suspicious of its disruptive and revolutionary potential, while the ‘*ulamā*’, (the religious scholars, including the theologians and jurists), particularly those who served on official positions, and had come to represent the religious authority, were even more

¹ The term ‘Muslim Lands’ here refers to the areas inhabited by population predominantly or significantly Muslim by faith.

apprehensive of the Sufis. Some of them sincerely contested the Sufi doctrines and practices, while others were envious of the public sway which the Sufis enjoyed, since the Sufis were seen by the people as an alternative locus of religious authority.

The present chapter is an attempt to explore the meaning, origin and evolution of Sufism, and delineate its cardinal doctrines and institutionalization of major Sufi practices. It also seeks to explain the causes behind the rapid popularity of the Sufi movement among the Muslims. In addition, it investigates the relationship of the early Sufis with the various political authorities.

1.1 What is Sufism?

Since there is a lack of a standard appellation for Sufism or *taṣawwuf*, especially in studies on it in non-oriental languages, a number of terms are in common currency for it. The terms Sufism and *taṣawwuf* are interchangeably used for other phrases such as mysticism or Islamic mysticism. However, there are conceptual problems with their nomenclature, particularly regarding the latter two. In fact, the Western scholars of Sufism, and the orientalist, have tended to interpret Sufi doctrines and practices by means of Christian concepts, which is quite misleading and confusing. This tendency is evident from the use of terminology having Christian connotations, such as sainthood, for describing and explaining Sufi concepts, as discussed earlier in the introduction of the study. Before we look into the details of Sufism, the meanings of these terms have been briefly explored hereunder:

The term 'mysticism' is used in a generic sense to refer to any of the mystical traditions in, or spiritual essentials common to, all great religions of the world like Hinduism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Hellenism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is considered to be the core of all religions.² Mysticism is generally believed to be associated with mysterious phenomena. The words 'mystic' and 'mystery' have common etymological root, being derived from a Greek word *myein*, meaning "to close the eyes."³ Mysticism has been defined as "the belief that knowledge of God and of real truth may be reached by directing one's mind or through spiritual insight... independently of reason and the senses."⁴ In fact, it implies the esoteric aspects and the spiritual current going through many of the great religions. Broadly speaking, it underlies some basic principles common to all the mystical traditions. These principles entail a direct consciousness of God by an individual, his or her comprehension of the Divine Truth, and the consequent development of his or her meditative and intuitive faculties.

Here it seems useful to briefly explore the meanings of terms related to mysticism. One such term is mystic, used both as a noun and as an adjective. As a noun, a mystic is defined as a person who tries to become united with God and so reach truths beyond human understanding. As an adjective, it is defined as (i) having hidden meaning or spiritual power, (ii) of or based on mysticism, and (iii) causing feeling of deep respect

² For a brief account of mysticism in various religious traditions, see *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 10, art. Mysticism by Louis Dupre' (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 245-61. Keeping in view the dominant doctrinal trend in the mystical systems of various religions, Dupre' has labeled Hindu mysticism as the Mysticism of the Self, that of Buddhism as the Mysticism of Emptiness, that of Eastern and early Western Christianity as the Mysticism of the Image, that of Islam and modern Christianity as the Mysticism of Love, and that of Judaism as Eschatological Mysticism.

³ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003 rpt., first published 1975), p. 3.

⁴ Jonathan Crowther, ed., *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 5th ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 770.

and wonder.⁵ Since the terms mysticism and spiritualism or spirituality are often used interchangeably, it is pertinent to look into their definitions as well. Spiritualism has been defined as “belief in the possibility of receiving messages from the spirits of the dead”, whereas spirituality has been defined as “the state or quality of being concerned with spiritual matters.”⁶ The Sufi adepts also focus on their spiritual development and self-purification, and in some instances, the Sufis are said to derive spiritual benefit from the spirits of the Sufis of bygone ages.

The term ‘Sufism’ is of German coinage. In 1821, a Latin work by F. A. D. Tholuck, a German professor of Divinity, introduced the term.⁷ Used in common parlance, it is generally perceived to be an anglicized version of the word *taṣawwuf*. The postfix ‘ism’ refers to a system or a philosophy. The term Sufism was popularized by the British Orientalists,⁸ which has been spelled as Sufiism as well.⁹ Owing to its having gained common currency, the term Sufism has been used in the present study.

A word of Arabic origin,¹⁰ *taṣawwuf* is the name given to the mystical tradition of Islam, or Islamic mysticism. It is generally considered to be a standard appellation in studies on Sufism in oriental and non-Western languages. In common parlance, an individual who gets associated with Sufism or becomes a ‘seeker of divine truth’ is

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 1146.

⁷ F. A. G. Tholuck, *Sufismus sive Theosophia Persarum Pantheistica* (Berlin: Duemmleri, 1821).

⁸ William C. Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001 rpt., first published 2000), p. 2.

⁹ For instance see ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, Eng. trans. R. A. Nicholson (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1976 rpt., first published 1911), passim.

¹⁰ Mawlawī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Mawlānā Muḥammad Sa‘īd, and Mawlawī Muḥammad Munīr, *Lughāt-i Sa‘īdī*, 3d ed., (Karachi: H. M. Sa‘īd Co., 1957), p. 168.

described as a Sufi or an initiate. William Stoddart makes an important clarification in this regard: “Strictly speaking, the Arabic word *ṣūfī*, like the Sanskrit word *yogī*, refers only to one who has attained the goal; nevertheless, it is often applied by extension to initiates who are still merely traveling towards it.”¹¹ So a Sufi does not have to be necessarily an adept; any individual committed to traversing the spiritual trajectories may also be termed as a Sufi.

Before we look into the definition and meaning of *taṣawwuf*, it seems befitting to explore the etymological derivation of *taṣawwuf* and Sufi.

1.1.1 Etymological Derivations of *Taṣawwuf* and Sufi

The Arabic word *taṣawwuf* is derived from the word Sufi. There have been different theories about the etymological derivations of the words *taṣawwuf* and Sufi. Medieval scholars of tenth and eleventh centuries wrote treatises on the subject as well.

Abū Bakr al-Kalābādī (d. 995), a tenth-century scholar of Sufism, devotes an entire chapter on how the Sufis account for their being called Sufis. He cites various opinions regarding the etymological sources of the word Sufi, which have been summarized as such: *ṣafā* (purity), because of the purity of their hearts, *ṣaff* (rank) as they are in the first rank before God, *ṣuffāh* (the platform) as the qualities of the Sufis resembled those of the *aṣhāb al-ṣuffāh*, (People of the Platform; a group of the Companions of the Prophet who had devoted their lives to worship and learning), *ṣūf*

¹¹ Stoddart, *Sufism: The Mystical Doctrines and Methods of Islam*, pp. 20-21.

(wool) because of their habit of wearing wool, and *şafwah* (choice or selection) owing to their being the elect, or the chosen or selected ones.¹²

An eleventh-century Sufi-scholar ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Hujwīrī (d. 1071 circa) discusses the etymological roots of *taşawwuf* at some length in his monumental work *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (The Unveiling of the Veiled). In addition to its etymological derivation from *şūf* or wool, he cites the opinions of others in this regard. He informs that some assert that the Sufis are called so because they are in the first rank (*şaff-i awwal*), others maintain that it is because the Sufis claim to belong to the *aşhāb al-şuffah*, while still others contend that the title is derived from *şafā* (purity). Nonetheless, al-Hujwīrī accepts that these explanations of the true meaning of Sufism are far from satisfying the requirements of etymology, though each of them is supported by subtle arguments. He concludes by asserting that the word Sufi has, in fact, no etymology.¹³

Wilberforce Clarke writes in the introduction to the English translation of ‘*Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*’ written by a thirteenth-century Sufi-scholar Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafş ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234) that the word Sufi has been derived from *şūf* (wool), *şūfiy* (wise or pious), *şūfi* (woollen), *şafā* (purity) and *şāfi* (pure).¹⁴ Titus Burckhardt rejects the view

¹² For a detailed discussion, see Abū Bakr al-Kalābādī, *Kitāb al-Ta‘rūf li-Madhhab ahl al-Taşawwuf*, Eng. trans. A. J. Arberry, *The Doctrine of the Sufis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978 rpt., first published 1935), pp. 5-11.

¹³ Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 30, 34.

¹⁴ See Wilberforce Clarke's Introduction in Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī, ‘*Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*’, Persian trans. from Arabic Maḥmūd ibn ‘Alī al-Kāshānī, Eng. trans. from Persian H. Wilberforce Clarke (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 2001 rpt., first published 1891), p. 1.

that the etymological origin of the term Sufi goes back to the Greek word *sophia*, which mean wisdom and wise/philosopher respectively.¹⁵

The above discussion indicates that there is no consensus regarding the etymological derivation of the words *taṣawwuf* or Sufi. Nonetheless, according to the generally accepted view by a majority of scholars of Sufism, Sufi has been derived from the Arabic word *ṣūf* meaning wool. Hence, *taṣawwuf* literally means ‘wearing wool’, and Sufi is the ‘one who wears wool’. According to Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 988), a tenth-century Sufi-scholar, in pre-Islamic times, it was a custom among the ascetics as well as the ancient prophets to wear coarse woolen garments.¹⁶ This particular attire symbolized their self-denial and rejection of worldly desires and material needs, as well as penitence. In the Near East, woolen cloaks were also worn by Nestorian Christian monks, who had adopted poverty for reasons of piety, and later it came to be used by early Muslim Sufis as well.

Various views have been expressed about the first usage of the term *taṣawwuf* and the epithet Sufi. Al-Hujwīrī traces back the use of the word *taṣawwuf* to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), as he cites his saying: “He who hears the voice of Sufis (*ahl al-taṣawwuf*) and does not say Amen to their prayers is inscribed before God among the heedless.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Titus Burckhardt [Ibrāhīm ‘Izz al-Dīn] argues that it is etymologically untenable because the Greek letter *sigma* normally becomes *sīn* (s) in Arabic and not *ṣād* (ṣ). It may be, however, that there is an intentional, symbolical assonance here. Idem, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, trans. D. M. Matheson (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1996, rpt., first published 1976), p. 3, n.1. See also Baldick, *Mystical Islam*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Abū Naṣr ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Alī al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Luma’ fī’l Taṣawwuf*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (London: Luzac and Co., 1914), p. 21.

¹⁷ Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, p. 30.

As for the epithet Sufi or *ahl al-taṣawwuf*, al-Sarrāj states that the word Sufi was current in pre-Islamic days for people of excellence and virtue, but with specific connotation of *taṣawwuf*, it gained common currency during the times of *tābi‘īn* (the successors of the Companions of the Prophet) and *tab‘ tābi‘īn* (the successors of these successors).¹⁸ According to Abū ‘l-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 1072), before the eighth century A.D. or the second century A.H., the term *ahl al-taṣawwuf* was already being used for specific groups and individuals having proximity with God.¹⁹ Abū Hāshim al-Kūfī (d. 776) is considered to be first person who was labeled as a Sufi.²⁰ In fact, many Companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had a Sufi bent of mind, and had devoted themselves to prayers and worship, which is considered to be one of the characteristics of the Sufis. However, for these Companions, including the *ahl al-ṣuffah* (People of the Platform),²¹ the title or epithet of Sufi was never specifically used in its present connotation. Al-Qushayrī argues that the ‘Companions’ of the Prophet or *al-ṣahābah* were so-called because no epithet could be more respectable than a *ṣahābī*.²² This view has been corroborated by Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492) as well.²³ Therefore, the earliest Sufis, who were the contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), were not designated as Sufis. Similarly, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn (b. 1332-d. 1406) argues that in the first three generations of Islam, Sufism was

¹⁸ Al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma‘*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁹ Abū ‘l-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī, *Risālah-‘i Qushayriyyah*, Urdu trans. with Introduction and Notes Pīr Muḥammad Ḥasan (Islamabad: Idārah-i Taḥqīqāt-i Islāmī, 1970), p. 21.

²⁰ B. A. Dar, “Section A: Sufis Before al-Ḥallāj” in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M. M. Sharif, vol. 1 (Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2001 rpt., first published 1961), p. 336.

²¹ For a list of this pietistic circle of early Sufis, see al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 81-82.

²² Al-Qushayrī, *Risālah-‘i Qushayriyyah*, p. 21.

²³ Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-Uns min Ḥadarāt al-Quds*, ed. with Introduction and Notes Maḥmūd ‘Ābidī (Tehran: Intishārāt Ittilā‘āt, 1370 Solar A.H.), p. 15.

too general to have a specific name. However, later when worldliness spread, and materialism crept in the Muslim community, those who dedicated themselves to the worship of God were distinguished from the rest by the titles of *Şūfiyah* and *Mutaşawwifah*.²⁴

1.1.2 Defining Sufism

While referring to various definitions of Sufism in Arabic and Persian works on the subject, Reynold Nicholson makes an interesting observation that their chief importance lies in showing that Sufism is undefinable.²⁵ Nonetheless, scholars of Sufism have attempted to define it. What follows is a selection of a few definitions of Sufism or *taşawwuf* by some eminent scholars of the subject:²⁶

Scholars have defined and explained Sufism in their own ways. We will see how various scholars and authors have defined and perceived the meaning and salient features of Sufism. According to Murray Titus, Sufism is “an attitude of mind and heart toward God and the problems of life.”²⁷ Spencer Trimingham defines mysticism as a specific method of approach to reality by making use of intuitive and emotional spiritual faculties. These faculties are generally dormant but they can be called into play through training

²⁴ ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Eng. trans. from Arabic Franz Rosenthal, vol. III (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1958), chap. VI, sec. 16, p. 76.

²⁵ Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979 rpt., first published 1914), p. 25.

²⁶ While outlining the views of scholars, no distinction has been made between mysticism or Sufism, as many scholars seem to use these terms interchangeably.

²⁷ Murray T. Titus, *Indian Islam: A Religious History of Islam in India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 111.

under guidance.²⁸ Annemarie Schimmel defines the spiritual current in a wider sense and holds that it is the consciousness of the one reality that can be called Wisdom, Light, Love or nothing. Mysticism is the love of the Absolute--for the power that separates true mysticism from mere asceticism is love.²⁹ According to Burckhardt, *at-taṣawwuf* or Sufism is an expression of the inward or internal (*bāṭin*) and esoteric aspect of Islam, as distinguished from its outward or external (*ẓāhir*) and exoteric aspect. It designates the “whole of the contemplative ways founded on the sacred forms of Islam.”³⁰ In the opinion of A. J. Arberry, Sufism is the mystical movement within Islam, whereas a Sufi, the one who associates himself with this movement, is an individual who is devoted to an inner quest for mystical union with his Creator. It also involves a ‘personal trafficking with God’.³¹

Frithjof Schuon divides the religion of Islam into three basic dimensions: *islām* (outward works of the religion), *īmān* (faith), and *iḥsān* (virtue and perfection) according to a *ḥadīth* of Gabriel. According to him, the third dimension of *iḥsān*, which literally means embellishment, beautiful activity, right-acting or charitable activity, is essentially an esoteric notion, and it is ‘quintessential esoterism’. *Iḥsān* is an operative virtue, which confers upon believing and doing the qualities that make them perfect, and intensify and deepen both faith and works.³² In the words of Stoddart, mysticism is the “inward or

²⁸ Spencer J. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 1.

²⁹ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 4.

³⁰ Burckhardt, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, pp. 3, 164.

³¹ See Introduction in A. J. Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Auliya' (Memorial of the Saints) by Farid al-Din Attar* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 1-2.

³² Frithjof Schuon [Shaykh 'Īsā Nūr al-Dīn Aḥmad], *Sufism: Veil and Quintessence*, Eng. trans. William Stoddart (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1985 rpt., first published 1979), pp. 129-30.

supra-formal dimension”³³ as opposed to the outward and formal expression of a religion. Explaining the distinguishing features of the Sufis, Hardy opines that they “craved for a more emotional religion, one in which God appeared as a loving, succoring friend rather than as an abstract definition of undifferentiated unity, incomprehensible in His essence, inscrutable and arbitrary in His decrees.”³⁴ Like Schuon, William Chittick also divides Islam into the above-mentioned three dimensions, and identifies the third dimension of *ihsān* to be concerned with depth, or the inner attitudes that accompany activity and thought, with Sufism. He argues that the Quranic usage of the word *ihsān* makes clear that it is not only an external and ethical good, but also an internal, moral, and spiritual good.³⁵

The underlying theme in all these definitions seems to be the idea of locating the latent divine sentiment in one’s heart or conscience. It is an attitude of soul that entails an individual’s direct relationship with God with a profound comprehension of the Real and Absolute Truth. The method involved in this quest for spiritual development is contemplative instead of scholastic. The core practices of Sufism lead to purification of the self, and it endeavours to regulate and direct the spiritual life of people. A Sufi aims at a bi-dimensional development of his self; first, the strengthening of his spiritual and personal connection with God, and secondly, perfecting his inter-personal relationships.

³³ Stoddart, *Sufism: The Mystical Doctrines and Methods of Islam*, p. 19.

³⁴ Peter Hardy, “Part IV: Islam in Medieval India”, in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, ed. Ainslie T. Embree, vol. 1, 2d rev. ed., (New Delhi: Viking, 1991), p. 447.

³⁵ William C. Chittick, *Faith and Practice of Islam: Three Thirteenth Century Sufi Texts* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000), pp. 2-5, 10-12. According to Chittick, in the *ḥadīth* of Gabriel, the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) defined *ihsān* as “serving [or worshipping] God as if you see Him, because if you do not see Him, He nonetheless sees you.” Chittick also adds that two Quranic terms, *ikhhlās* (sincerity) and *taqwā* (God-wariness), are close to *ihsān* in meaning.

The Sufis believe in three corresponding and complementary spheres of Sufism: *Shari'ah* (the revealed law), *ṭarīqah* (the way or the method), and *ḥaqīqah* (the ultimate truth). *Shari'ah* is the preferred law in Islam for regulating the conduct of the individual and collective life. The *ṭarīqah* is the way or the method which guides a seeker on the path of Sufism, while the *ḥaqīqah*, the ultimate truth or the knowledge of and nearness to God, is the goal of a Sufi's life.

1.2 Origin of Sufism

Varied opinions have been expressed regarding the origin of Sufism: some suggest that the roots of Sufism lay in pre-Islamic religious traditions, while some argue that the Quranic injunctions and the deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) were the bases of Sufi doctrines and practices. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century western orientalist generally corroborate the former view, while the later day historians and scholars of Sufism generally maintain the latter position.

According to E. H. Palmer, Sufism is "the development of the Primaeval religion of the Aryan race."³⁶ Nicholson points out to the external or non-Islamic influences on Sufism, which include Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, Buddhism, and Vedantism. However, he adds that the seeds of Sufism were inherent in Islam, and these internal forces within Islam cannot be isolated from the external factors. To quote him, "the great non-Islamic systems ... gave a stimulus to various tendencies within Islam

³⁶ E. H. Palmer, *Oriental Mysticism: A Treatise on Sufistic and Unitarian Theosophy of the Persians* (London: Luzac, 1969 rpt., first published 1867), as cited in Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 9; for a detailed discussion, see pp. 9-11.

which affected Sufism either positively or negatively.”³⁷ John P. Brown alludes to the “deeply spiritual principles” which appear in the Quran, and the “innumerable mystical...reasonings” of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH).³⁸ While critically reviewing the varied theories of the origin of Sufism, Edward G. Browne gives the verdict in favour of the theory that Sufism represents the Esoteric Doctrine of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH).³⁹

Commenting on the origin of Sufism, Duncan B. Macdonald suggests: “Like almost everything else in Islam the seeds were already in the mind of Muhammad.”⁴⁰ Louis Massignon, a renowned French scholar of Sufism, has altogether rejected the view that Sufism was alien to Islam. Instead, he has argued that “it is from the Koran, constantly recited, meditated upon, applied, that Islamic mysticism proceeds, in its origin and development.”⁴¹ Similarly, H. A. R. Gibb corroborates the views of Louis Massignon.⁴² According to Philip K. Hitti, Sufism has its origin in Quran and *aḥādīth*, though later on it absorbed elements from Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism and Buddhism.⁴³ G. E. von Grunebaum maintains that Sufism was “anchored firmly in the word of God, that source from whose multiplicity it extracted the challenge to interiorize

³⁷ Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 20; for a detailed discussion, see pp. 8-23.

³⁸ John P. Brown, *The Darvishes or Oriental Spiritualism*, ed. with Introduction and Notes H. A. Rose (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1968 rpt., first published 1868), pp. 71-72.

³⁹ Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 1, *From the Earliest Times until Firdawsī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977 rpt., first published 1902), p. 418-19; for a detailed review of the various theories of the origin of Sufism, see pp. 418-21.

⁴⁰ Duncan Black Macdonald, *Aspects of Islam* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), p. 184.

⁴¹ Louis Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique mystique musulmane* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1954), p. 104, as cited in Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 153.

⁴² Hamilton A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism: A Historical Survey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 128.

⁴³ Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan, 1958), p. 433.

relations with the Creator.”⁴⁴ Trimmingham considers Sufism a natural development within Islam, which owed little to non-Muslim sources, though, he adds, it received “radiations from the ascetical-mystical life and thought of eastern Christianity.”⁴⁵ Schimmel also argues that the view that Sufism was an Islamized form of Vedanta philosophy or *Yōgā*, has now been discarded. In her opinion, “Sufism traces its origin back to the Prophet of Islam and takes inspiration from the divine word as revealed through him in the Koran.”⁴⁶

Stoddart refutes the view that Sufism developed chiefly as a result of external influences. However, he succinctly puts it: “Sufism has sometimes borrowed formulations deriving from Neo-Platonic and other spiritual doctrines which coincide with its own view of reality, but this has always been for convenience of expression, and does not constitute any syncretism.”⁴⁷ Khaliq Ahmad Nizami has also suggested that the origin of the Sufi ideology can be traced back to the Quranic and Prophetic traditions. He has rejected the alternative views that the Sufi ideology owes its origin to the Greek, Vedantic or Buddhist philosophies.⁴⁸ Many scholars of Sufism, including its proponents,

⁴⁴ G. E. von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam: A History 600-1258*, Eng. trans. Katherine Watson (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970, German ed. published from Berlin in 1963), p. 131.

⁴⁵ Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 345, 24.

⁴⁷ Stoddart, *Sufism: The Mystical Doctrines and Methods of Islam*, p. 43.

⁴⁸ See details in Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Tārikh-i Mashā'ikh-i Chisht*, vol. 1 (Delhi: Idārah-'i Adabiyāt-i Dellī, 1980), pp. 45-49.

trace its origin back to the Quran⁴⁹ and the practice of the Holy Prophet (PBUH),⁵⁰ and cite a number of Quranic verses and *aḥādīth* in support of their assertion.⁵¹

While discussing the origin of Sufism, the similarities between the spiritual traditions, doctrines and mystical experiences of the adherents of faiths other than Islam and that of Sufism have been brought to the fore. First, one may find a certain degree of truth in the assertion that all mystical traditions associated with different religions of the world have something in common, but the similarities and commonalities do not necessarily mean that the latter was a borrowing from the former in terms of its doctrinal system, methods and practices. Secondly, there were stark and marked differences among the mystical and spiritual traditions as well, as each of them stemmed from a particular religious tradition. Moreover, historical factors such as intellectual environment, socio-cultural conditions and political climate in which a mystical system took roots and flourished, cannot be overlooked in this regard. Lastly, Sufism, as with any other mystical tradition, did not develop in void. When the Muslims came into contact with people of other races, cultures and intellectual traditions, a mutual exchange of ideas was inevitable. The Sufis too imbibed ideas and concepts as well as practices from them, which helped develop the Sufi doctrines further.

⁴⁹ See details in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Quran as the Foundation of Islamic Spirituality", in *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, vol. 1, *Foundations* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000), pp. 3-10.

⁵⁰ Frithjof Schuon, "The Spiritual Significance of the Substance of the Prophet", in *ibid.*, pp. 48-63.

⁵¹ For a brief discussion, see Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī, *Tārīkh-i Taṣawwuf: Hindī, Yūnānī, Islāmī* (Lahore: 'Ulamā' Academy, 1976), pp. 104-22. For some Quranic verses and *aḥādīth* relating to Sufism, see Stoddart, *Sufism: The Mystical Doctrines and Methods of Islam*, pp. 77-82.

1.3 Rise and Growth of Sufism: A Causal Explanation

Sufism is essentially a minority affair, as it demands considerable intellectual sophistication from the aspirants of the path of Sufism. Nevertheless, it has popular manifestations as well, which are generally referred to as 'popular religion' or 'low culture'. Regarding popular religion, Jonathan Berkey makes an important clarification that it was not identical but closely associated with Sufism.⁵² The early centuries of Islam witnessed the growing popularity of Sufism. The renowned Sufis who lived in the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries included Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728), Mālik ibn Dīnār (d. 748), Abū Hāshim al-Kūfī, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 777), Abū Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 777/8), Dā'ūd al-Ṭā'ī (d. between 777 and 782), 'Abd Allāh ibn Mubārak (d. 797), Rābi'ah al-'Adawiyah al-Baṣrī (d. 801), Fuḍayl ibn 'Ayāḍ (d. 803), Shaqīq al-Balkhī (d. 810), Ma'rūf al-Karkhī (d. 815), Bishr ibn al-Hārith (d. 841), Abū Bakr al-Shiblī (d. 846), Aḥmad ibn Ḥarb (d. 849), Hārith al-Muhāsibī (d. 857), Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 861), Sarī al-Saqāṭī (d. 867), Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 874), Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 896), Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī (d. 908), Abū 'l-Qāsim Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 910), Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922), Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Niffārī (d. 965) and Abū Ṭālib Makkī (d. 996).

By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Sufism had strongly made its presence felt in the Muslim lands. It earned approval and wide-ranging appeal among people, and in

⁵² Berkey contends that the characteristic features of popular religion included the popularization of practices associated with Sufis, veneration of individuals, visitation of tombs, and the rise of syncretic trends and superstitions. Idem, *The Formation of Islam*, pp. 248-57, esp. 249.

the words of Hodgson, it transformed into a kind of “institutionalized mass religion”.⁵³ By that time Sufism had integrated into the religious life of the Muslims, and had emerged as a dominant mode of Islamic piety. In fact, in the last quarter of the eleventh and early years of the twelfth centuries, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī (b. 1058-d. 1111), tried to reconcile Sufism with the *Sharī‘ah*, and thus, bridged the gulf between the two.⁵⁴ His younger contemporary, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 1166) further popularized Sufism. As the juristic and Sufi variants of Islam came closer to each other, more people including the jurists belonging to various schools of *fiqh* (Muslim jurisprudence) started entering the fold of Sufism. Lessons in jurisprudence were given in the *khānqāhs* while the *madrasahs* housed Sufis as well. As a result of it, the institutions of *madrasahs* and *khānqāhs* were later merged at the end of the fifteenth century.⁵⁵ The process of assimilation of the juristic and Sufi variants of Islam gave further impetus to the popularity of Sufism in the Muslim societies.

A host of factors contributed to the rise and popularity of Sufism, which can be explained in the backdrop of the political, intellectual, religious and socio-economic conditions of the then Muslim lands. It is in this context that causal explanations for the historical evolution of Sufism in Egypt, Iraq, Persia, Central and Western Asia, and Afghanistan have been explored briefly hereunder.

⁵³ Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2, *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 210-22.

⁵⁴ For a detailed study, see W. Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953).

⁵⁵ For a detailed study, see Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 47-50, 56-60.

To begin with, the socio-economic, religious, theological and intellectual factors considerably contributed to the rise and popularity of Sufism. Sufism or the Sufi tendency in Islam asserted itself during the Umayyad rule (661-750) when God-conscious persons raised the voice that rulers were indulging in this-worldly activities, involving acquisition of material wealth and kingly ostentations, and not giving heed to salvation in the hereafter. Thus, Sufism can be interpreted as a reaction against growing materialism, which spread in Muslim societies as a result of prosperity in the wake of conquest and annexation of vast territories in Persia, Byzantium, Central and Western Asia, and Africa. Sufism began as an ascetic revolt against luxury and worldliness, and henceforth, came to be identified with otherworldliness. As already pointed out, the Sufi doctrine of voluntary poverty stood in sharp contrast to the wealth of the royal household and the well-off urbanites. The Sufi ideal of poverty represented a silent protest against the growing materialism and covetousness among the Muslims.

According to Victor Danner, during the eighth and ninth centuries the original synthetic vision of things presented by the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), wherein the exoteric and the esoteric dimensions were considered different but complementary, was gradually replaced by a separation between the esoteric and exoteric domains. In other words, the message of Islam was gradually reduced to its exoteric aspect, which provoked the rise of esotericism or Sufism in these centuries.⁵⁶ Actually, during these early centuries, the territorial stretch of the Muslim Empire had considerably expanded, and had brought millions into the fold of Islam, which necessitated the

⁵⁶ Victor Danner, "The Early Development of Sufism" in *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Spirituality*, ed. Nasr, vol. 1, *Foundations*, pp. 239, 252.

codification of *ḥadīth* literature, *fiqh*, history, biography, and many other branches of learning. With the emergence of various schools of Sunni jurisprudence or *madhāhib*, the *Shari'ah* or the exoteric aspect of Islam was crystallized. Consequently, not only the esoteric aspect of Islam was neglected, rigidity and formalism also crept in the various practices of these schools of *fiqh*. The Sufis, who had by now come to represent the esoteric aspect of Islam, were critical of the cold rigidity and formalism of these schools of *fiqh*. The Sufis had an antipathy towards ceremonialism in religious observances with exclusive stress on ritualistic expressions, devoid of any inner meaning or essence, which was prevalent among the people at large. More emphasis was laid on the outward dimension of varied acts of worship, often in disregard of their inward significance or purpose.⁵⁷ Under the influence of these so-called 'externalist' theologians, jurists and 'ulamā',⁵⁸ who were more concerned with the outward forms and expression of Islamic observances, the people had generally tended to reduce Islam to ritualism and ceremonialism. In these circumstances, Sufism stood as a symbol of reaction against the prevalence of 'dogmatic piety'⁵⁹ and formalism, and thus symbolized non-conformism to religious conservatism. In the words of Titus, Sufism was a "natural revolt of the human heart against the cold formalism of a ritualistic religion."⁶⁰ The Sufis were also perturbed by hair-splitting theological quibbles and bitter controversies among the proponents and

⁵⁷ For a brief discussion on the outer and inner meanings of Quranic verses and *ahādīth*, see Martin Lings [Abū Bakr Sirāj-ud-Dīn], *What is Sufism?* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1983 rpt., first published 1975), pp. 28-32, and Syed Ali Ashraf, "The Inner Meaning of the Islamic Rites: Prayer, Pilgrimage, Fasting, Jihad," in *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Spirituality*, ed. Nasr, vol. 1, *Foundations*, pp. 111-30.

⁵⁸ Hodgson has used the term 'Shari'ah-minded' 'ulamā' for the externalist 'ulamā'. Idem, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam*, passim.

⁵⁹ Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, p. 131.

⁶⁰ Titus, *Indian Islam*, p. 111.

adherents of various schools of *fiqh*, which occasionally led to riots in urban centres such as Baghdad.

During the ‘Abbāsīd rule, the God-conscious people came to face, along with the challenge of materialist and this-worldly trends, another challenge, namely the challenge posed by the Greek rationalist influences and rise of the Mu‘tazilah. Where it contributed to the intellectual growth of the Muslims in a positive manner, it had its excesses too. The most basic form of the challenge was that, judged on the basis of reason alone, nothing could happen without a cause. The implication was that, everything happening according to fixed laws, God now stood inactive, without any active role in the functioning of the universe. In fact, the translation of Greek philosophical texts into Arabic had encouraged a rational enquiry into the tenets of the Muslim faith. For the Muslim philosophers and rationalists, associated with the Mu‘tazilite school of thought, the main criterion for every reality was reason. In other words, in the words of Danner, knowledge was reduced to “abstract, mental categories, bereft of direct, spiritual vision of the Real...”⁶¹ The Muslim ‘*ulamā*’ presented their answer to the challenge under a new branch of knowledge called ‘*Ilm al-Kalām*. The Sufis presented their own answer, which emphasized immersion in search for nearness to God. According to Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938), the germs of scepticism latent in rationalism ultimately necessitated an appeal to a super-intellectual source of knowledge.⁶² Sheer rationalism and pursuit of religious truths using dialectical methods, largely borrowed from the Greek thought, drove the introverted people like the

⁶¹ Danner, “The Early Development of Sufism” in *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Spirituality*, ed. Nasr, vol. 1, *Foundations*, p. 254.

⁶² Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (Lahore: Bazm-i Iqbal, 1959 rpt., first published 1954), p. 79.

Sufis to search the Ultimate Truth by emotional means involving intuitive faculties of human beings. The Sufis urged for a kind of freethinking in their pursuit of the Ultimate knowledge of God and universe. They sought a direct and personal method of comprehending the Absolute Truth or the Supreme Being. It was believed that the search or quest for God, out of God's own blessings, was to result in making a person's heart filled with knowledge: a person could thus have *ma'arifah* or the intuitive knowledge, and ultimately *ḥaqīqah*, the knowledge of and nearness to God.

This approach was distinct not only from the conventional mode of thinking prevalent among the majority of conformist '*ulamā*', theologians and jurists, but also from the rationalist approach of the Mu'tazilites. The tenth and eleventh centuries are considered to be the apogee of Mu'tazilite thought, after which it witnessed a constant decline, when the Mu'tazilite thought was countered by al-Ghazzālī, who was a Mu'tazilite philosopher-turned-Sufi.⁶³ Thus, Islamic philosophical and intellectual movements such as Mu'tazilism also provided a stimulus to the Sufi tendencies within Islam.

Apart from these, there were political factors as well which played a crucial role in the rise and popularity of Sufism. A brief description of these factors seems quite appropriate here.

It is said that the more the social decay and political instability, the more it led to the spread of Sufism. The discontent within the Muslim community in its early days

⁶³ See note 54 (*supra*).

resulted in disturbances and turbulence which culminated in the assassination of the third and the fourth Pious Caliphs, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (d. 656) and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 661). The Pious Caliphate was succeeded by the Umayyads, and later on by the ‘Abbāsids, who turned it into a hereditary monarchy, notwithstanding their claims to the Caliphate. In fact, since the demise of the Prophet (PBUH), and more particularly since the assassination of Caliph Ali, the question of political authority and transfer of power was never resolved. Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī (d. 680), the son of the Pious Caliph ‘Alī, led the famous rebellion against the Umayyad rule. The rebellion ended in disaster at Karbalā in Iraq in 680, and consequently, the family of Caliph ‘Alī was almost exterminated. The tragic events at Karbalā rocked the Muslim community, and spurred a movement of pious penitence among its members for having failed to come to the support of Ḥusayn against the Umayyads.

Under the Umayyads, the Arabs, who constituted the ruling elite, came to monopolize all political, military, administrative, social and economic powers, whereas the non-Arabs were generally denied any noticeable share in the government, barring a few exceptions. The dissatisfaction of the people, particularly the non-Arab subject races, with the oppression and socio-economic injustice of the rulers found political, religious, philosophical, social, cultural and literary expressions.

The grievances of Khārijites and Shī’ites found political expression in the outbreak of various revolts during the Umayyad rule. The Mawālī Movement represented the resentment of the non-Arab subject races, who despite their acceptance of Islam, were

placed below the Arabs in social and political hierarchies. They were even subjected to taxes, which were theoretically supposed to be imposed on the non-Muslims.⁶⁴ These and many other discriminatory measures drove many of them to revolts. Iraq and Khurasan were the provinces that were threatened most by revolts and other disturbances. Since these centres of discontent had witnessed Umayyad persecution, these very areas became the early breeding grounds for the growth of Sufism. Amid hostile environment of political persecution, the people of Iraq, especially of Kūfah and Baṣrah--the strongholds of opposition against the Umayyads, found solace in the fold of religion, and more notably in Sufism.

Under the 'Abbāsids, on the intellectual plane, the Mu'tazilites rejected the Ash'ariyah model of theology⁶⁵ since, in their view, the model served the interests of the ruling elite. The model, in fact, served as an instrument of subservience to the political authority unquestioningly. Some scholars have even asserted that the reasons for the rise of both the Mu'tazilites and the Sufis were 'more political rather than religious or academic in nature.'⁶⁶ Though the assertion seems reductive as Sufism was more than a political response to the then prevailing conditions, it cannot be denied that there were political grounds, in addition to other more fundamental reasons, behind the rise and growth of Sufism. Since both the Mu'tazilites and the Sufis had attempted to redefine the

⁶⁴ Bertold Spuler, *The Muslim World: A Historical Survey*, part I, *The Age of the Caliphs*, Eng. trans. from German F. R. C. Bagley (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), pp. 39-40, 44, and Reuben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam (Being the Second Edition of The Sociology of Islam)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979 rpt., first published 1957), p. 58.

⁶⁵ Ash'arism is a philosophico-religious school of thought, associated with Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ismā'il al-Ash'arī (d. 941 or 945). For al-Ash'arī's life and works, Ash'arite theology and its fundamental principles, and Ash'arite metaphysics, see M. Abdul Hye, "Ash'arism," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. Sharif, vol. 1, pp. 220-43.

⁶⁶ See Introduction by Manzoor Ahmad in Mohammad Kamal, *Heterodoxy in Islam* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1993), p. vi.

basic concepts of Muslim theology, they were branded as 'heterodox', in order to curb their freedom of speech and freedom of action. In the same way, the *zindīqs* or freethinkers were persecuted by the state in the later half of the eighth century. It was, in fact, the political and economic dissatisfaction under the guise of religion, which led to the rebellions of many Persian leaders in Khurasan like Sunbadh, the Magian (755),⁶⁷ and Ustādhīs (767-8),⁶⁸ and many more. The movement of a Mazdakite named Bābak (816-838) in the days of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Māmūn (r. 813-33) was also a political expression of growing economic discontent. Bābak's heresy acquired the dimensions of a peasant revolt, since the followers of the Mazdakī sect were derived from the peasant communities of northern Persia. Bābak stood for the break-up of large feudal estates, and distribution of land among landless peasants.⁶⁹ Similarly, during the 'Abbāsīd rule, the grievances of the subject races, particularly the Persians, found a literary expression in the form of Shu'ūbiyah movement. It claimed superiority for non-Arabs in poetry and literature.⁷⁰

It was against the backdrop of these religio-theological and intellectual, as well as political and socio-economic conditions, that the rise and popularity of Sufism can best be understood. In short, Sufism implied not only a protest against the growing materialism among the Muslims, exclusive insistence on exoteric aspect of Islam,

⁶⁷ See a brief discussion in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. IX, art. Sunbadh by W. Madelung, pp. 874-75.

⁶⁸ See a brief discussion in *ibid.*, vol. X, art. Ustādhīs by W. Madelung, pp. 926-27.

⁶⁹ For the doctrines of Mazdakism, see *ibid.*, vol. VI, art. Mazdakism by M. Guidi [M. Morony], pp. 949-52, esp. 950.

⁷⁰ Spuler, *The Muslim World: A Historical Survey*, part I, *The Age of the Caliphs*, p. 55. For a brief analysis of the social significance of the Shu'ūbiyah movement, see Hamilton A. R. Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, eds. Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 62-73.

intensifying formalism of the ‘*ulamā*’, and Mu‘tazilism, but was also a subtle and guised protest against the high-handedness of the rulers and other political abuses of the age.

1.4 Development and Institutionalization of Sufi Practices

The doctrines and practices associated with Sufism grew and developed in evolutionary stages. The gradual institutionalization of Sufi practices took place three centuries after the ‘Abbāsīd Revolution in 749. Having passed through its formative phase in eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, Sufism acquired the contours of a vibrant movement with relatively systematic doctrines and institutions during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Scholars of Sufism have attempted to theorize about the historical evolution of Sufism by dividing it into different stages or phases. Such attempts have been made by scholars of Sufism such as Nizami, Trimmingham, Fritz Meier and Arthur Buehler.

According to Nizami, there can be discerned three distinct stages in the development and growth of Sufi movement in Islam. These are: (i) the period of the quietists, (ii) the period of the mystic philosophers, and (iii) the period of the *Silsilahs*.⁷¹ The designation of the first phase has been borrowed by Nizami from Nicholson.⁷² According to them, the Sufis of the early era represented a reaction against the contemporary political conditions of the Umayyad Empire. There was a silent and subtle protest against materialistic tendencies among the rulers by the profoundly God-conscious persons or the early Sufis. The prominent Sufis of the era include Ḥasan al-

⁷¹ Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, “Mysticism” in *Islam*, Guru Nanak Quincentenary Celebration Series (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1969), pp. 55-66.

⁷² Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 4. For an entirely different meaning of quietism, see Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 266.

Başrī, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, Abū Hāshim ‘Uthmān and Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawiyah al-Başrī. The Sufis of this phase focused on their self-purification. Literature on Sufi thought began to appear in the ninth and tenth centuries, and it is only in the eleventh century that Sufis began to be organized in groups. Here one may argue that the designation of this era seems somewhat inappropriate, as it does not adequately convey the characteristic features of Sufism in the said period. Moreover, it makes one assume that these early Sufis, being quietists, had cut themselves off from the world and retired into seclusion. On the contrary, some of the Sufis of this era even participated in military campaigns (*jihād* or holy wars) against the Byzantine Empire. These included, among others, celebrated Sufis like Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak, Shaqīq al-Balkhī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥarb. So the epithet ‘quietists’ seems somewhat inapt. The second phase was characterized by the development of a well-knit system of Sufi thought by such Sufi philosophers as Abū ‘l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, Muḥiyy al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī (b. 1165-d. 1240), popularly known as *Shaykh al-Akbar* (The Greatest Master), and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273). The last and the most important stage was characterized by the rise of Sufi *silsilahs* (chain of transmission of spiritual authority) in the twelfth century.

Trimingham’s three-phase theory of the historical evolution of Sufism has been summarized below:⁷³ The first phase, i.e. the *Khānqāh* stage, was marked by tremendous creativity of thought and simplicity of the Sufis’ social organization. Initially, there were no formal bonds between the master and his pupils, but later, *khānqāhs* or the Sufi dwellings were established all over the Muslim world. The second stage--*ṭarīqah*--saw

⁷³ See details in Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, chaps. 1-3, pp. 1-104.

the doctrinal evolution and social organization of Sufism in the form of Sufi schools, along with the formation of spiritual lineages or *silsilahs*. The practice of formal initiation was also introduced, and Sufism became institutionalized in this stage. In the third and final stage, called *ṭā'ifah*, it acquired the form of Sufi cults with exaggerated veneration and even excessive adoration of Sufis, who then came to be designated as *pīrs*. These Sufi-cults were centred on the spiritual power or blessing (*barakah*) of a single individual. The headship of *ṭā'ifahs* became hereditary. Tombs of great Sufis, called *dargāhs*, generally replaced *khānqāhs*. This phase also witnessed the introduction of astrology and magic among Sufi circles.

Trimingham's theory is no longer being used in recent works on Sufism. One may discern certain inconsistencies in it. First, it is difficult to demarcate the first and the second stages chronologically. Secondly, the nomenclature of the third phase may cause some confusion, as *ṭā'ifah* came to represent the multiple branches of the main *ṭarīqahs*, in the sense used by Trimingham for the last phase, which he dates from the fifteenth century. The word had, in fact, acquired this new meaning later on, as from the ninth century, the Sufi groups were referred to as *ṭā'ifah*, meaning the group of men of God. The famous ninth century Sufi Junayd al-Baghdādī was known as *Saīyid al-Ṭā'ifah* (the Master of the men of God). Moreover, the Sufis continued to view themselves as a *ṭā'ifah*, that is, a distinct group of men of God, and be referred to as *ṭā'ifah* later on as well.⁷⁴ Thus, the designation of the third and the last phase, which corresponds to a development that took place much earlier, may create confusion for the readers. Lastly, Trimingham's categories do not highlight the striking change in the role of the Sufi

⁷⁴ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. X, art. *Ṭā'ifa* by E. Geoffroy, pp. 116-17.

Shaykhs in the entire system of spiritual guidance and development in particular, and in the society in general.

Ernst and Lawrence observe that Trimingham's work is marred by a theory of classicism and decline, as the above-mentioned first two phases of Sufism, according to Trimingham, were marked by the rise and growth of Sufism, while the third, and final, phase was marked by decline in Sufism.⁷⁵

Meier periodizes Sufism in four historical phases: pre-classical Sufism, classical Sufism, post-classical Sufism, and neo-classical Sufism. According to him, the eighth century constituted the pre-classical phase of Sufism when the woolen garment was widely adopted by the Sufis, and the practices of *samā'* (devotional music concert) and *dhikr* (remembrance of God, or recollection of God's presence) were developed. During the ninth, tenth and the early part of the eleventh centuries, which constituted the classical era of Sufism, the Sufi ideas found public approval, and it emerged as a religious movement. The great Sufi masters lived in this era, which also witnessed the composition of Sufi texts and the establishment of purpose-specific residential schools of the Sufis. In the post-classical age of Sufism, corresponding to the end of the eleventh century, and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a higher value was placed upon visionary and occult experiences. The era was also characterized by the veneration of the Sufi Shaykhs, emergence of Sufi orders, and 'formularization', i.e. composition of Sufi prayers and litanies. The neo-classical stage of Sufism, stretching from the thirteenth to the fourteenth

⁷⁵ Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 11. Ernst and Lawrence also maintain that Trimingham's observations 'contain a modern and strongly Protestant attitude.' Moreover, he sees decline in Sufism as inevitable.

centuries, was distinguished by a revival of the more restrained practices of the classical era of Sufism, and a return to the fundamental principles of Islam. In this era, the reformers of Sufism, who included the Sufis as well as the theologians critical of Sufi practices, tried to curtail the excesses of Sufism. Unlike the earlier phases of Sufism, member of more than one Sufi order was prevalent in this era.⁷⁶

The scheme of periodization suggested by Meier covers only the period stretching from eighth to the fourteenth centuries, and does not include the subsequent centuries. Like the periodization of Sufism suggested by Trimmingham, Meier's scheme also presumes a theory of classicism, privileging one stage of Sufism, i.e. the classical age, over rest of the ages, i.e. the pre- and post-classical eras.

Buehler has also attempted to mark some stages in the evolution of Sufism. These are characterized by (i) the teaching-Shaykhs, (ii) the directing-Shaykhs, and (iii) the mediating-Shaykhs.⁷⁷ Buehler's periodization, being overtly 'Shaykh-centric', assumes the institution of the Sufi Shaykh as the centre of gravity in Sufism from its very inception. The Sufi Shaykh gradually acquired a central role in the development and growth of Sufism. In the early centuries of the development of Sufism, all Sufis were not necessarily associated with teaching or instruction in a formal or informal sense. In addition, Buehler has discussed the mediational function of the Sufis from various

⁷⁶ Fritz Meier, "The Mystic Path", in *The World of Islam*, ed. Bernard Lewis (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980 rpt., first published 1976), pp. 117-25.

⁷⁷ Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya, and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).

dimensions, viz., between God and humans, between individuals, and between factions,⁷⁸ but he has not discussed the mediational function of the Sufis between the state and the people.

The phenomenon of Sufism is said to have existed during the times of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH),⁷⁹ as many of his Companions (*ṣaḥābah*) attended to their spiritual development by receiving spiritual guidance directly from the Prophet himself. The Sufi proclivities of many of his Companions are evident from different episodes of their lives. These include, among others, the four caliphs, viz., Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, ‘Umar al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, as well as those belonging to the House of the Prophet (PBUH) such as Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī, and ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī (Zayn al-‘Ābidīn), etc.⁸⁰ *Ahl al-ṣuffah* (People of the Platform) are considered to be the first collective expression of the Sufi tradition in Islam. These included, among others, Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) such as Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (d. 653)⁸¹, Salmān al-Fārisī, and Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ al-Ḥabashī, etc.⁸² Another ‘Companion of the Prophet’ named Aways al-Qaranī, who had never met the Prophet (PBUH), is also counted among the early Sufis.⁸³

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷⁹ It has been argued that the Traditions of the Prophet abound in Sufi precepts, which show that the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) was in fact, as the Sufis insist, the first Sufi Shaykh in all but name. Lings, *What is Sufism?*, p. 101.

⁸⁰ See details in al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, pp. 70-80.

⁸¹ For a detailed study, see A. J. Cameron, *Abu Dharr al-Ghifari: An Examination of His Image in the Hagiography of Islam* (Lahore: Universal Books, 1978).

⁸² Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, pp. 81-82. The Sufis of the later times, including the *tābi‘ūn* (the successors of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH)), *tab‘ tābi‘īn* (the successors of these successors) and those who came after them, have also been dealt with by al-Hujwīrī. See chaps. X and XI, pp. 83-160.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 83-84.

The Sufis of the seventh and eighth centuries either lived as isolated individuals or formed loose groups. Later, from the ninth century, the Sufi groups came to be called *tā'ifah*. Sufis of the early era included the wandering mendicants, traveling from one place to another in groups or individually, and those leading sedentary lives. The three major centres of Sufism which emerged in the eighth and ninth centuries were Iraq, especially the metropolitan cities of Baṣrah, Kūfah and Baghdad; the politically turbulent Province of Khurasan, especially the city of Balkh; and Egypt. Other early centres of Sufism included Damascus, and the desert wastes of Arabia and Sinai. What follows is a brief description of the development and growth of Sufism in various phases. However, it is important to note that the evolution of these phases of Sufism followed different timetables in different regions of the Muslim lands.

1.4.1 Appearance of Sufi Dwellings or *Khānqāhs*

Eighth and ninth centuries was the time when the Sufi practices began to be crystallised. While discussing the evolution of Sufism, Gibb states that the collective organization of the Sufis began to appear in the eighth century in the form of small groups, and then appeared their dwellings.⁸⁴ These Sufi dwellings were variously known as *ribāṭs*, *zāwiyahs*, *jamā'atkhānahs* and *khānqāhs* in different geographical regions, but the variation in their nomenclature also depended on their specific functions and role as well. In contemporary literature, these Sufi dwellings are often mistakenly referred to as hospices, convents or monasteries, but these latter terms carry their own distinctive

⁸⁴ Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, p. 132. According to a more recent work, the first *khānqāhs* or the Sufi dwellings were built around the beginning of the ninth century. For a detailed discussion on the development of *khānqāhs*, see Muḥsin Kiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Khānqāh dar Īrān* (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-'i Tahūrī, 1990), pp. 137-84, and Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, pp. 44-54.

meaning in the context of Christianity. Moreover, these terms do not capture the complexity of the Sufi institution.

Regarding the distinctive meaning attached to each type of the above-mentioned Sufi dwelling, Trimmingham opines that

the *ribāṭ* was an Arab type of hostel or training-centre; the *khānaqāh* was the Persian non-training hostel type introduced into the cities of the Arab world; *zāwiya* was the term applied to smaller establishments where one shaikh dwelt with his pupils; whilst a *khalwa* designated the 'retreat' of a single dervish, frequently a cell situated around a mosque square. A more isolated 'hermitage' was sometimes called a *rābiṭa*.⁸⁵

According to J. Chabbi, the term *ribāṭ* has a host of meanings attached to it, such as a look-out post, small fort, fortified city, caravanserai, staging-post and an urban establishment of the Sufis.⁸⁶ Many of its meanings are associated with warfare. In fact, there were *ribāṭs* or Sufi dwellings on the marches with Byzantium, and in North Africa. The term *zāwiyah* was used for smaller Sufi dwellings, where the Sufis lived and prayed, but unlike the *khānaqāhs*, these dwellings were not meant to serve as places where their resident Sufis could receive others, and thus make contact with the world outside. Such dwellings were generally prevalent in the West or al-Maghrib. However, the term was systematically employed in this sense from the thirteenth century onwards.⁸⁷ In addition, there emerged small Sufi retreats or small cells known as *khalwah* associated with a single Sufi master. Sometimes the small cells constructed inside a large Sufi dwelling for

⁸⁵ Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁶ For details see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. VIII, art. *Ribāṭ* [(a) History and development of the Institution] by J. Chabbi, pp. 493-506.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 504.

individual Sufis were also known as *khalwahs*.⁸⁸ The term *jamā'atkhānah* (literally meaning a place of communal living) is generally employed for Sufi dwellings constructed by the Chishtis in India, which consisted of a large hall, where all the inmates of the *khānqāh* used to live together under one roof.⁸⁹

As for the Sufi dwellings called *khānqāhs*, they seem to have been adopted from the Karrāmīs. In the ninth and tenth century eastern Persia, the adherents of Karrāmiyah sect in Khurasan and eastern provinces had established their centers of worship and instruction all over Khurasan, known as *khānqāhs*. These centres were modeled on similar institutions run by Manicheans in Khurasan and Transoxiana.⁹⁰ Ibn Karrām (d. 896), the founder of the sect, was an ascetic of Sijistān, who had constructed his *khānqāh* in Jerusalem.⁹¹ The sect, known after its founder, was considered heretical by the Sunnis. However, this sect disappeared later, but its legacy still continues in the form of Sufi dwellings. Etymologically, *khānqāh* is a composite word: *khān* is derived from the Persian word *khānāh* meaning a house, while the Arabic word *qāh* means a practice or an act of worship. Therefore, a *khānqāh* literally means a place of worship.⁹² In studies on Sufism, the term is used for all types of Sufi dwellings in a generic sense, without any distinction; and hence, it has been used in the ensuing discussion as well.

⁸⁸ Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 169.

⁸⁹ In addition, the Sufi dwellings, also referred to as *dā'irah* (literally meaning circle), came into existence later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their primary aim was to provide place for spiritual meditation to people. For a brief discussion on the various types of Sufi dwellings, see, Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (Aligarh: Department of History, Muslim University, 1961), p. 175, n. 1.

⁹⁰ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. IV, art. *Khānqāh* by J. Chabbi, pp. 1025-26.

⁹¹ W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), p. 289.

⁹² Nithār Aḥmad Fārūqī, *Chishtī T'alimāt aur 'Aṣr-i Ḥādir mēṅ un kī Ma'nwiyyat* (New Delhi: Islam and the Modern Age Society, 1981), p. 80.

The foundations of the Sufi dwellings or *khānqāhs* were laid in the ninth, tenth and early eleventh centuries, though these developed fully later on. There are different assertions as to where and when the first *khānqāh* was built. According to some, the first *khānqāh* was constructed in Ramalah in the then Syria,⁹³ whereas according to others, an early *ribāṭ* was founded on Abbadān Island on the Persian Gulf by an eighth-century Sufi, ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd (d. 793).⁹⁴ Later on, these Sufi dwellings mushroomed in large numbers in urban centres as well as in rural settings all over the Muslim lands.

The *khānqāhs* mark the collective organization of the Sufis. With their emergence, the collective and communal aspect of Sufi lifestyle became a requirement for the disciples, and those who aspired to tread the path of Sufism. At the beginning of the eleventh century, Abū Ishāq al-Kazarūnī (d. 1033) required that his disciples live a communal life in *khānqāhs* which he had founded.⁹⁵ Similarly, a Khurasanian Sufi, Abū Sa‘id ibn Abī al-Khayr (d. 1049) maintained a personal *khānqāh* in his native town Mayhana, near Sarakhs. He outlined the rules and regulations guiding the behaviour of the disciples living collectively, and required from them that they perform their prayers in

⁹³ Dar, “Early Sufis (Continued)” in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. Sharif, vol. 1, p. 336.

⁹⁴ Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 5, and Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 31. For a brief life sketch of ‘Abd al-Wahid ibn Zayd, see *Encyclopedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), vol. 1, art. ‘Abd al-Wahid ibn Zayd by P. Nwyia, pp. 167-68, and Idārah-’i Taṣnīf-o Tālīf, *Anwār-i Aṣfiyā’* (Lahore: Shaikh Ghulam Aḥi and Sons, n.d.), pp. 38-40.

⁹⁵ Wilfred Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany, NY: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), pp. 48-49.

common, and other acts of worship together.⁹⁶ Thus, by the eleventh century, these Sufi dwellings had become an essential feature of Sufism.

These *khānqāhs* or Sufi dwellings were constructed either by a sultan, a noble, some wealthy individual, or by some prominent Sufi. They were supported by endowments (*awqāf*) which their founders (kings, nobles, or the Sufis themselves) had set aside for the purpose of their maintenance and upkeep. But despite the financial support from *waqf* funds, they enjoyed much autonomy and independence. Hodgson contends:

The worship at the mosque never ceased to be associated in some degree with political authority; it was a state function. The *khāniqāhs* were eminently private from the very beginning. Even when endowed by an amīr, they retained this air. When the *khāniqāhs* became the foci of the more private, personal side of worship, they reinforced the fragmentation of Muslim societies in apolitical social forms (and at the same time ... gave these forms legitimacy and spiritual support).⁹⁷

In fact, the eleventh century marked the triumph of Sunni traditionalism, and the overthrow of political Shi'ism in the wake of Seljūq's wresting control of the 'Abbāsīd heartlands from the Shi'ite Buwayhids. It gave rise to a new institution in the Muslim society—the *madrasah* (college of learning), particularly founded and patronized by the Seljūq rulers, who were staunch Sunnis. They tried to reassert their political authority as well as that of Sunni Islam. These political developments considerably contributed to the stabilization of Sufi institutional structures. Historians have pointed out the parallel institutional development of *madrasahs* and *khānqāhs* in that period. As many Sufis became associated with these *madrasahs* for teaching and lecturing, there remained little

⁹⁶ R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980 rpt., first published 1921), p. 46.

⁹⁷ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*, pp. 213-14.

distinction between a mosque or a *madrasa* and a Sufi *khānqāh*.⁹⁸ Like the *madrasahs*, the Seljūqs and Ayyūbids also encouraged the foundation of *khānqāhs*, which, like the *madrasahs*, were managed, endowed and supervised by the state. Nonetheless, an adverse impact of the state's support to the *khānqāhs* was that they became state-run institutions, controlled by the state, as their directors came to be officially appointed. These appointments were often political in nature, as the directors appointed there were often not necessarily Sufis. By the twelfth century, the *khānqāhs* had become rich and flourishing establishments.

1.4.2 Introduction of *Silsilahs* or *Ṭarīqāhs*

Another important development in Sufism was the emergence of *silsilahs* (pl. *salāsīl*) or *ṭarīqahs* (pl. *ṭurūq*)⁹⁹. *Ṭarīqāh* literally means a path or way, and a practical method, whereas *silsilah* literally means a connection, a link or a chain. They can be defined as spiritual lineage or pedigree, or initiatic genealogy. Every *silsilah* traced its spiritual lineage or genealogy to some revered Sufi Shaykh, considered to be the founder of the *silsilah*, and through him it was linked to his spiritual preceptor, and this vertical chain of authority was invariably traced back to the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). In this way, the succeeding Sufis, including the founder of the *silsilah*, recognized themselves as the spiritual heirs of the Prophet. The first pedigree of Sufi teachers was prepared by al-Khuldī (d. 959), after which this practice became customary among the Sufis of later

⁹⁸ Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge*, pp. 44-94.

⁹⁹ For a brief survey, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. X, art. *Tarika* by E. Geoffroy, pp. 243-46.

generations.¹⁰⁰ A *silsilah* as a chain of genealogical authority serves as a source of identity and legitimacy for the succeeding generations of Sufis.

The Sufi groups or *tā'ifas* of the early era later graduated into *silsilahs*. They have been incorrectly translated as Sufi orders, Sufi fraternities or brotherhoods. Having their origin in Christianity, these terms have distinctive meanings and connotations of their own, and do not adequately explain the true nature and characteristics, and convey the complexity of Sufi *silsilahs*. It was the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which witnessed the mushroom growth of these *silsilāhs* all over the Muslim lands, though al-Hujwīrī writing in the eleventh century mentions twelve schools of Sufis, condemning the practices and beliefs of the two, while approving the rest of the ten schools,¹⁰¹ but Trimingham contends that these schools had not developed into *silsilāh-ṭarīqah* at that time.¹⁰² Some of the important *silsilahs* that emerged later on are outlined hereunder along with their founders:

- ***Silsilah Qādiriyyah*** was named after Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī, who is buried in Baghdad.
- ***Silsilah Chishtiyyah*** was founded by Khwājah Abū Ishāq Shāmī (d. 940). It originated from Chisht, a small village near Herat in Khurasan in the then Persia. Nowadays it is situated in Afghanistan. The *silsilah* was popularized in India by Shaykh Mu‘in al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer. (d. 1236)

¹⁰⁰ Meier, “The Mystic Path”, in *The World of Islam*, ed. Lewis, p. 119.

¹⁰¹ The former ten schools include the Muḥāsibīs, the Qaṣṣārīs, the Ṭayfūrīs, the Junaydīs, the Nūrīs, the Sahlīs, the Ḥākīmīs, the Kharrāzīs, the Khafīfīs, and the Sayyārīs, whereas the rest of the two are the Ḥulūlīs and the Ḥallājīs (including the Ibāhatīs as well as the Fārisīs). Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 130-31; for their details, see chap. XIV, pp. 176-266.

¹⁰² Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 12.

- ***Silsilah Rifā‘iyyah*** was derived from Shaykh Aḥmad ibn al-Rifā‘ī (d. 1182)
- ***Silsilah Yasaviyyah*** was associated with Shaykh Aḥmad al-Yasavī (d. 1166)
- ***Silsilah Shādhiliyyah*** originated from Shaykh Abū Maydān Shū‘ayb (d. 1197) but attributed to Shaykh Abū ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Shādhilī (d. 1258), who popularized it.
- ***Silsilah Badawiyyah*** of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Badawī (d. 1276) was centred in Egypt.
- ***Silsilah Suhrawardiyyah*** was founded by Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qāhir (d. 1167-8), also known as Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī. Suhraward was a town situated in north-eastern Persia. The real founder of the *Silsilah* is considered to be his nephew named Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī, the author of a famous Sufi text *‘Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*.
- ***Silsilah Kubrawiyyah*** was originated from Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221).
- ***Silsilah Naqshbandiyyah*** is initially attributed to Shaykh Yūsuf al-Hamadānī (d. 1140) and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Khāliq al-Ghujdawānī (d. 1179). Later, it came to be identified with Shaykh Muḥammad Baha’ al-Dīn Naqshbandī (d. 1389). The town of Naqshband was situated near Bukhārā in Central Asia. The *silsilah* was introduced in India by Khwājah Bāqī Bi-Allāh in the fifteenth century. The *Silsilah* is also referred to as *Silsilah-i Khwājagān* as well.
- ***Silsilah Mawliyyah*** was founded by Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, buried in Konya (Turkey). He was the author of famous *Mathnawī Ma‘nawī*, a classical Persian work of Sufi poetry. The *silsilah* is confined to Anatolia, and whirling *darvēshes* are identified with it.

From the beginning of the thirteenth century, the *silsilahs* assumed the role of schools of Sufism, with one centre attached to one Sufi Shaykh, which perpetuated his name, his particular teaching, method, and spiritual practices. These *silsilahs* were quite diverse in their nature and characteristics. They betrayed the diversification of religious and spiritual experience as the methods adopted for the spiritual training and growth of the aspirants or disciples were quite different and diverse, such as modes of *dhikr* or remembrance of God, *samā'* or Sufi music concert, and *raqṣ* (devotional ecstatic dance). In fact, the goal of all the Sufis and Sufi *silsilahs* was one, but they pursued different paths to reach their goal. It is important to clarify that the crystallization of *silsilahs* did not imply that the adherents of one were separated or isolated from other *silsilahs*. The Sufi initiates could get initiated in multiple *silsilahs* in order to get spiritual benefit from them. However, the practice of multiple initiation was fully developed at a later stage, and it is reported that the Egyptian Sufi of Shādhilī *Silsilah*, Shaykh Sha'rānī (d. 1565) was formally initiated in twenty-five *silsilahs*, other than his own.¹⁰³

1.4.3 Centrality of Sufi Master or Shaykh in Sufism

Another simultaneous development was that with the rise of the *silsilahs*, the Sufi masters or Shaykhs emerged as a centre of gravity of the Sufi establishment. Here it seems appropriate to briefly discuss the categories of Sufis and the alternative expressions used for them. Al-Hujwīrī distinguishes between a complete Sufi, a genuine seeker of the Sufi path, and the imposter or charlatan. A Sufi is the one who has reached the goal, who has annihilated his self into the Absolute Truth, whereas *mutaṣawwif* means 'he who strives

¹⁰³ Michael Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writings of 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1982), p. 90, as cited in Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, p. 239.

to be a Sufi' or the Sufi aspirant. As for the *muṣtaṣwif*, he is an imposter or a charlatan pretending to be a Sufi for some personal gains.¹⁰⁴

There is a nomenclatural variety for the epithets used for the Sufis. A host of Arabic and Persian terms like *marabūṭ*, *darvēsh*, *faqīr*, *pīr*, *walī*, *murshid*, *Shaykh*, *majdhūb* and *qalandar* are found in common usage. Nonetheless, they have distinctive meanings attached to them, though some of them are often used interchangeably. These terms having slightly different meanings need to be clarified here, as some of these terms denote the varied categories of Sufis as well.

The Arabic term *walī* is understood in Sufi literature as someone who is close to God or is considered to be a friend or protégé of God, whereas the Persian epithet *pīr* generally refers to a healer or problem solver. Some scholars have employed the term *pīr* in a general sense as well. For instance, Pinto defines *pīr* in a generic sense as a guide, helper, teacher who takes people to God, he is closely associated with the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), has a close and intimate relationship with Allah, acts as a mediator between God and man, and he is all-knowing and all-seeing.¹⁰⁵

The Arabic word *shaykh* has a variety of meanings, but it is a more general term employed for both *pīr* and the Arabic word *murshid*, meaning a spiritual mentor or guide. The term *faqīr* literally means a poor, derived from the Arabic word *faqr* (voluntary

¹⁰⁴ Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 34-35.

¹⁰⁵ See details in Desiderio Pinto, *Piri-Muridi Relationship: A Study of the Nizamuddin Dargah* (Delhi: Manohar, 1995), pp. 125-40; see characteristics of *pīrs*, pp. 141-47, duties of *pīrs*, pp. 147-52, *adab* (etiquettes for veneration) of *pīrs*, pp. 152-59, and their powers, pp. 159-77.

poverty), which is one of the celebrated virtues of Muslim Sufis and non-Muslim ascetics alike. Its Persian equivalent is *darvēsh*, derived from *dar* (door) and *vēsh* (to beg) meaning poor or beggar who goes from door to door. *Darvēsh* is the one who has given up all his worldly possessions, and either lives in a *khānqāh* or as a wandering mendicant.¹⁰⁶ In addition, there are other categories as well which include the following: the Persian epithet *majdhūb* refers to the one absorbed in, or enraptured with, the love of God, generally having lost sanity and self-control; while *qalandar* is generally understood to be a libertine mendicant having antinomian and non-conformist tendencies.¹⁰⁷ However, it must be remembered that some of these terms were not current in the early days of Sufism, and had become popular later on.

Now coming back to the point, with the development of the *silsilahs*, the Sufi Shaykhs assumed a central position not only in a *silsilah* or a *khānqāh*, but in the entire process of spiritual development and training of a disciple.¹⁰⁸ The Sufi doctrine and concept of *ṣuḥbah* (literally meaning companionship) explains it well. According to it, the company of a Sufi Shaykh is considered to be a source of spiritual development of a disciple, and is preferred to seclusion.¹⁰⁹ With the passage of time elaborate rules of

¹⁰⁶ Brown, *The Darvishes or Oriental Spiritualism*, p. 49. Also see Duncan Black Macdonald, *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam* (Beirut: Khayats, 1965 rpt., first published 1909), p. 162.

¹⁰⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu' in al-dīn Chishtī of Ajmer*, pp. 1-8, A. C. Mayer, "Pir and Murshid: An Aspect of Religious Leadership in W. Pakistan", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 3 (1966-67), pp. 161-64, and Jurgen Wasim Frembgen, "The Majzub Mama Ji Sarkar: A Friend of God moves from one house to another," in *Embodying Charisma*, ed. Werbner and Basu, pp. 144-46.

¹⁰⁸ For a critical analysis of the doctrine of salvation through the *Silsilah* and the Shaykh, and adoration of the Shaykh, see Muhammad Salim, "Conception of Shaikh in Early Sufism", in *The Proceedings of the All Pakistan History Conference, (First session) Held at Karachi, April 1951*, comp. S. Moinul Haq (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, n.d.), pp. 89-95.

¹⁰⁹ See details in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 14, art. *Ṣuḥbah* by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, pp. 123-24, and art. Spiritual Guide by Stuart W. Smithers, pp. 29-37, esp. 32-33.

ṣuḥbah were developed, and there also appeared texts and literature on the subject as well. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī’s (d. 1021) *Kitāb Adāb al-Ṣuḥbah* being one such example in point. Thus, the institution of a directing Shaykh or preceptor, being indispensable for the spiritual development and training of a *murīd*, emerged as a centre of gravity in the entire system of spiritual guidance. The term *murīd* literally meant an aspirant, or he who has made up his will, i.e. to enter the path. It was used as a designation for the disciples or initiates. The disciples can broadly be classified into two types depending on their motives in getting initiated: those getting initiated or becoming *murīd* for the purpose of seeking the blessings of a Sufi Shaykh, and those performing *bay‘at* for embarking on the spiritual trajectory. Only few disciples could become the *khulafā’* (pl. of *khalīfah*) or the spiritual successors of a Shaykh, who were authorized by him to teach, guide and instruct disciples.¹¹⁰ Generally, one among them was designated as his principal *khalīfah*.

Another development was the inception of the practice of disciples performing *bay‘at* (literally meaning a pledge or oath-taking) at the hands of a Sufi Shaykh. *Bay‘at* has been defined as formal initiation, whereby an aspirant gets initiated in a *silsilah*, which is tantamount to admitting a seeker in the fold of Sufism. The term *murīdī* is used for discipleship. The *pīr-murīd* relationship was characterized by an intensely personal bond between the two. Elaborate rules and regulations guiding the conduct of the

¹¹⁰ In fact, from the eleventh century onwards the term *khalīfah* came to be used in the context of Sufism for the successors of the Sufi Shaykhs. For a brief survey, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. IV, art. *Khalīfa*, part iii, *In Islamic Mysticism* by F. De Jong, pp. 950-52.

disciples were also laid down.¹¹¹ For instance, a twelfth-century Sufi, Shaykh Abū 'l-Najīb al-Suhrawardī, wrote a treatise *Adāb al-Murīdīn* for the guidance of disciples. Another practice among the Sufis was the bestowal of a *khirqah*, a worn and patched cloak, to a disciple by a Shaykh, which symbolized the recognition of the Sufi training received by the former. The *khirqah* was a source of spiritual *barakah* (blessing) as well as symbolic of the trainee's rejection of wealth and material things in favour of spiritual riches. The origin of the practice of granting *khirqahs* goes back to the eighth century,¹¹² but the practice was still in its rudimentary stage at that time. In ensuing centuries, the practice became more common and was eventually institutionalized.

1.5 Fundamental Doctrines of Sufism

The doctrinal development of Sufism stretched over centuries. The clear articulation of the Sufi doctrines began as early as the eighth century, but there are no records of contemporary texts containing the historical evolution of these doctrines. One of the chief characteristics of the initial phase of Sufism was its doctrinal simplicity, when the adherents of Sufism focused more on its experiential aspects as compared to theorizing the Sufi practices. The ninth and tenth centuries witnessed the further doctrinal growth of Sufism as well as the theorization of Sufi practices. A detailed history of the doctrinal evolution of Sufism lies beyond the scope of the present study. Nonetheless, what follows

¹¹¹ For a detailed survey, see Bikram N. Nanda and Mohammad Talib, "Soul of the Soulless: An Analysis of Pir-Murid Relationships in Sufi Discourse," in *Muslim Shrines in India*, ed. Christian W. Troll (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 125-44.

¹¹² The practice of granting ceremonial garment or *khirqah* to a disciple by a Sufi Shaykh is mentioned as early as the eighth century by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥarb and al-Muḥāsibī. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. V, art. *Khirka* by Jean-Louis Michon, p. 17. According to Meier, the practice dates from the time of Shaykh Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn al-Khafīf (d. 981), a Sufi who lived in Shiraz (Persia). Idem, "The Mystic Path", in *The World of Islam*, ed. Lewis, p. 121.

is a very brief account of the fundamental Sufi doctrines. However, the ensuing discussion is focused less on the theosophical doctrines such as those concerning the attributes of God and the nature of gnosis, and more on the doctrines affecting the social attitudes and behaviour of the Sufis, which include their ethical ideals and moral values as well as ideas regarding their personal conduct. It seems necessary to point out that it is difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the two, as the doctrines of the former kind may have social implications.

While studying Islamic ethics, Donaldson takes note of the fact that when the principles and purposes of conduct are taken into consideration, the fundamentally mystical character of Muslim ethical thinking is soon evident.¹¹³ The ethical principles of the Sufis seem to be distinct from those of the so-called 'externalist' '*ulamā*', jurists and theologians, who were more concerned with the legal and juristic aspects of Islam. What follows is a brief description of the fundamental doctrines of Sufism:

The concept of gnosis or intuitive knowledge (*ma'arifah* or *ḥikmah*) as a means of comprehending God was first articulated by Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī. It is the intuitive or esoteric knowledge as opposed to knowledge acquired through five senses and reason ('*ilm* or exoteric knowledge), which leads to a comprehension of the Absolute. In other words, it is the super-intellectual knowledge of God.¹¹⁴ As the concept of *ma'arifah* or intuitive knowledge came very close to revelation to the Prophet, the '*ulamā*' possessing

¹¹³ Dwight M. Donaldson, *Studies in Muslim Ethics* (London: S. P. C. K., 1953), p. 110.

¹¹⁴ See details in al-Kalābādī, *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf*, pp. 46-51, al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 267-77, and al-Suhrawardī, '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif*', pp. 98-101. See also the views of al-Muḥāsibī on gnosis in Margaret Smith, *Al-Muḥāsibī: An Early Mystic of Baghdad* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1980 rpt., first published 1935), pp. 298-304.

knowledge of Islamic law or *Sharī'ah*, became highly critical of the Sufis. During the tenth century some important Sufis had to give their lives on charges related to the claim of intuitive knowledge. Conflict between Sufis of various hues and the 'ulamā' has, in one or the other form, continued ever since.

The concept of *fanā'* (the annihilation of the mortal self, or absorption into the Godhead) was central to the thinking of Persian Sufi Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī. In spiritual annihilation in God, the dichotomy and distinction between I and thou ceases to exist. *Fanā'* signifies the death of self-will and self-consciousness. A parallel idea is found in Hinduism and Buddhism as well. Another associated doctrine is that of subsistence or permanence (*baqā'*). Love for God in the Sufis' life holds the hope that beyond personal annihilation there will be divine restoration or permanence. According to al-Hujwīrī, Abū Sa'īd Kharrāz was the first to explain the states of *fanā'* and *baqā'*. As for the doctrine of *baqā'*, it signifies actual permanence in the Real. After *fanā'*, comes the stage of *baqā'*, when a person loses his status in the attributes of the Real and achieves a vision of God Himself.¹¹⁵ According to the doctrine of unity (*tawhīd*), God is the only reality and He is unique in his timelessness. He is incomparable, and nothing is like Him. It signifies the negation of God's temporality, and the affirmation that God is eternal.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ For details see al-Kalābādī, *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf*, pp. 120-33, al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 242-46, al-Suhrawardī, *Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, pp. 195-98, and M. Hamiduddin, "Early Sufis: Doctrines" in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. Sharif, vol. 1, pp. 332-34.

¹¹⁶ For an elaborate discussion, see al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 278-85, and Hamiduddin, "Early Sufis: Doctrines" in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. Sharif, vol. 1, pp. 320-21.

The early Sufis such as Ḥasan al-Baṣrī believed in and propagated the concept of fear (*khawf*).¹¹⁷ It connotes the fear of God's wrath, the Day of Judgment, punishment and hell fire. Love for God (*maḥabba*) is a central idea in a Sufi's life, which requires exertion, discipline and patience, but it is Sufi belief that he may be blessed with love inspired by God, love satisfied with nothing less than God. The notion of disinterested love of God was clearly articulated by Rābi'ah al-Baṣrī for the first time. Because of her advocacy for disinterested love of God, she became the model of selfless love among the Sufi circles. She urged the worship of God out of love, instead of owing to the fear of hell or desire for paradise. She taught that a Sufi must love God for Himself alone.¹¹⁸ Other Sufis like Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Sari al-Saqāṭī and Junayd al-Baghdādī further developed the idea.

Junayd al-Baghdādī advocated the principle of sobriety (*ṣaḥw*) in Sufi practices and behaviour. His apparent behaviour, actions, and utterances were in consonance with the *Shari'ah* (the Islamic law), and for this reason his Sufi doctrines and practices were generally approved by his contemporary theologians, jurists and 'ulamā'. The principle opposed to *ṣaḥw* is that of ecstatic intoxication or 'drunkenness' (*sukr*), characterized by loss of sanity and self-control, which signifies excess of longing and extreme love.¹¹⁹ It was propagated by early Sufis such as Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī and al-Ḥallāj.

¹¹⁷ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 30. See details in al-Kalābādī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rruf*, pp. 88-89.

¹¹⁸ Margaret Smith, *Rābi'a The Mystic and Her Fellow-Saints in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984 rpt., first published 1928), pp. 96-110.

¹¹⁹ For various explanations of the doctrine of sobriety, see al-Kalābādī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rruf*, pp. 110-12. For a discourse on sobriety and intoxication, see al-Hujwūrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, pp. 184-88.

Historians and scholars of Sufism have pointed out that the ascetic impulse, based on otherworldliness and utter renunciation of worldly pleasures, was part of the Sufi tradition from the very beginning.¹²⁰ One of the foremost Sufi doctrines was the doctrine of voluntary poverty (*faqr*), which was characterized by a denial of material needs. The lifestyles of Sufis exhibited indifference to wealth, and that was why they came to be referred to as *faqīr* (poor or destitute). The manifestations of poverty included extreme simplicity of living, lack of any worldly possessions, wearing of coarse clothes, having very simple food such as herbs, and even continual fasting. The early Sufi texts are full of exaltation of poverty, since it was treated as a celebrated virtue, practiced by the Prophet (PBUH) himself. One of the earliest Sufis, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī cherished the values of hunger and poverty, while branding wealth as an evil which distracts people from their righteous goal.¹²¹ Nonetheless, one comes across few exceptions such as Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī, who preferred wealth (*ghinā'*) to poverty.¹²²

The Sufi ideal of poverty stood in sharp contrast to the wealth of the royal household, the ruling elite and the well-off urbanites. The Sufi ideal of poverty symbolized a silent protest against the growing and widespread materialism, which permeated the Muslim community in the wake of conquest and annexation of vast territories in Persia, Byzantium, Central and Western Asia, and Africa, and had brought prosperity and affluence.

¹²⁰ Christopher Melchert, "The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E.," *Studia Islamica*, vol. 83 (1996), pp. 51-70.

¹²¹ See Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's letter to Umayyad Caliph, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, in A. J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2003 rpt., first published 1950), pp. 33-35.

¹²² Dar, "Early Sufis (Continued)" in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. Sharif, vol. 1, p. 339.

The Sufis believe that hearing the recitation of Quran, chanting of poetry or music may induce ecstasy in an individual. For this reason, devotional music or *samā'* is considered to be a source of ecstasy and a method of spiritual realization, and hence, permissible.¹²³ The devotional music and ecstatic dance was meant to arouse spiritual ecstasy and rapture, and many Sufis are said to have died from the heightened emotions caused by it. The formal practice of *samā'* was supplemented by ritualistic ecstatic dance or *raqs*, which was intended to plunge the dancer into a state of concentration upon Allah. Those who approved *samā'* and wrote about it can be classified into two groups: the Muslim philosophers (*falāsifah*) such as Abū Ya'qūb al-Kindī (d. 873), Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyya Rāzī (d. 932), Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 950), Abū 'Alī ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), Abū Bakr ibn Bājjah (d. 1138), and Ṣafī al-Dīn (d. 1293) as well as the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', the Brethren of Purity, (tenth century); and the Sufi-scholars such as al-Hujwīrī, Imām Ghazzālī, and Aḥmad Ghazzālī (d. 1126).¹²⁴ The practices of *samā'* and *raqs* became especially popular in the Middle Period with Sufis in Persia, India and Anatolia. The practice of *samā'* found its highest expression in the Sufis associated with the Mawliyyah *Silsilah*, whose founder, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī of Konya, the famous Persian Sufi poet, practiced it along with his disciples and associates.

Devotional music and ecstatic dancing among the Sufis evoked much criticism and objection from the 'externalist' '*ulamā'*', jurists and theologians, who were more

¹²³ For a brief survey, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. VIII, art. *Samā'*, part I, in *Music and Mysticism* by J. Dering, pp. 1018-19.

¹²⁴ Jean-Louis Michon, "Sacred Music and Dance in Islam", in *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Spirituality*, ed. Nasr, vol. II, *Manifestations*, pp. 472-78.

concerned with the outward conformity to the law or *Shari'ah*. Criticism to this practice came not only from the juristic circles, more particularly from the Ḥanbalīs, but also from the more sober Sufī circles. Its important critics included Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 894), Abū 'l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1200) and Taqī al-Dīn Abū 'l-'Abbas Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328).¹²⁵ Many Sufi-scholars have also expressed reservations for it, and have approved of it with some conditions for the listeners. Al-Hujwīrī is, for instance, among them who have approved it with some conditions. He has devoted an entire section to it in *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, and has dealt with its various principles, functions, conditions of performance, and aspects such as dancing and rending of garments in detail.¹²⁶ Similarly, Imām Ghazzālī, who approved it in principle, required certain conditions to be met before listening to it.¹²⁷

Another important Sufī doctrine is that of companionship (*ṣuḥbah*), which specifically refers to a Sufī's return from seclusion, as well as the company of the Sufī master for the disciple (*murīd*).¹²⁸ Another related doctrine is that of retirement (*khilwat*)¹²⁹ Adherence to Sufī way of life did not necessarily involve continuous seclusion or solitude, severing ties with the people at large, though the Sufis used to retreat from the worldly life for some period of time for spiritual gains. It is known as *khilwat*. The early Sufis while practicing it retired to forests, deserts or wildernesses. In

¹²⁵ Abī al-Dunyā wrote *Dhamm al-Malāhī* (Censure of Instruments of Diversion), while Ibn al-Jawzī wrote *Talbīs Iblīs* (The Dissimulation of the Satan) in condemnation of *samā'*. Ibid., pp. 471-72. Similarly, Ibn Taymiyyah wrote *Risālah-'i Samā'* in condemnation of *samā'*.

¹²⁶ Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, pp. 393-420.

¹²⁷ See a detailed discussion in Imām Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *Ihya Ulum-id-Din*, Eng. trans. Fazal-ul-Karim (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1981), chap. IX in Book II, pp. 203-24.

¹²⁸ For a detailed study, see al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, pp. 334-66.

¹²⁹ Al-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, pp. 70-73.

some cases it lasted for months, while in others it stretched over years and even decades. Nevertheless, it should not lead one into thinking that the Sufis led quietistic and secluded lives in general. It is essential to bear in mind that the practice of *khilwat* was temporary, after which the Sufis used to resume living among the people. It is important to note that all Sufis stressed the principle of service to humanity, which was, of course, not possible while in retirement.

Other important doctrines include the concept of sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*),¹³⁰ which required that only God be sought in every act of obedience to Him, and also implied sincerity in every thought and action; concept of repentance or penitence (*taubah*),¹³¹ which include repentance from sin as well as from forgetfulness and distraction from God; and concept of heightened or concentrated piety¹³² (*zuhd*, often mistakenly translated as asceticism) that signifies the abandonment of even the permitted pleasures of worldly life, and eventually giving up of everything that distracts the heart and mind from God. The concept of trust in, or reliance on, God (*tawakkul*)¹³³ was developed by Shaqīq al-Balkhī, a pupil of Ibrāhīm ibn Adham. Later on, it was further developed by Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī and Junayd al-Baghdādī as well. The doctrine of self-examination (*muḥāsabah*) was attributed to Ḥārith al-Muḥasibī,¹³⁴ which earned him his epithet as well.

¹³⁰ For details, see al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rruf*, pp. 90-91.

¹³¹ Ibid., pp. 81-82, and al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 294-99.

¹³² Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 110.

¹³³ Al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rruf*, pp. 92-93.

¹³⁴ Smith, *Al-Muḥāsibī: An Early Mystic of Baghdad*, p. 53; for details see pp. 168-77.

An essential Sufi value is that of tolerance in social behaviour and universalism in approach. The Sufis had an inclusive approach towards people belonging to different sects, juristic schools (*madhāhib*, pl. of *madhhab*), racial or ethnic groups, and even religions. They displayed more tolerance towards people, particularly the non-Muslims, as compared to the upholders of juristic Islam or theologians. In fact, Sufism served as a junction for mystically-inclined adherents of different religious traditions. Since the society under the vast Muslim Empires of the Umayyads and ‘Abbāsids had racially, ethnically, culturally and religiously pluralistic environment, there were more opportunities of interaction with people belonging to varied racial, ethnic, cultural backgrounds as well as religious traditions. The Sufis held discourses with the Christian priests, Jewish rabbis, and Buddhist and Zoroastrian sages. Moreover, Muslim society was also beset by strong sectarian cleavages, and there existed friction among the adherents of various *madhāhib*. Sufism left an indelible mark on the life of the Muslims, as the Sufis were beyond sectarian affiliations, despite the fact that most of them were *Jamā’i* Sunnīs by orientation.¹³⁵ In addition, though many of the Sufis taught *fiqh* in various *madrasahs* (religious seminaries), they did not make these juristic differences bones of contention.

Two complementary Sufi doctrines deserve special mention, since these have significant political linkages: the doctrine of *wilāyat* or *wilāyah* (spiritual territory or domain) and the doctrine of hierarchy of Sufis. According to the doctrine of *wilāyat*, various geographical territories are considered to be under the spiritual jurisdiction of

¹³⁵ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam*, p. 393.

different Sufi Shaykhs.¹³⁶ In other words, the entire world is considered to be divided into various geographical regions like different units of administration, each one of which is believed to be spiritually ruled by a Sufi Shaykh. The heads of various *silsilahs* used to dispatch their *khulafā'* to these *wilāyats*, who in turn used to appoint their subordinate *khulafā'* for towns and small cities. In this way, a main Sufi centre used to control a whole network of *khānqāhs* in various regions.¹³⁷ As for the doctrine of hierarchy of Sufis, it was clearly articulated by Shaykh Ibn al-'Arabī for the first time. He argued that there are different hierarchies among the Sufis. On the top of it is *qutb*, the spiritual ruler of the entire world, who is coexistent with the temporal Sultan or the king.¹³⁸

1.6 Relationship of Early Sufis with the State and Political Authorities

What follows is a brief discussion on, and analysis, of the relationship between the Sufis of the early era with political authorities. However, the discussion does not intend to be

¹³⁶ However, the doctrine of *wilāyat* or *wilāyah* is not to be confused with the concept of *walāyat* or *walāyah*, literally meaning to be near, or to be close to, and refers to closeness or love of God, saintship or sainthood. Moreover, the words *wilāyah* and *walāyah* are Arabic in origin, whereas *wilāyat* and *walāyat* are Persian words. The concept of *wilāyah* or *wilāyat* also refers to authority, power, and ability to act. See discussion on *wilāya* and *walāya* in Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, Introduction, pp. xvii-xxi. Also see Bernd Radtke, "The Concept of *Wilāya* in Early Sufism" in *Classical Persian Sufism: From its Origins to Rumi*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (London: Khānqāhī Ni'matullāhī Publications, 1994), pp. 483-96, Simon Digby, "The Sufi Shaikh as a Source of Authority in Medieval India", in *Islam et Socie'te' en Asie du Sud (Islam and Society in South Asia)*, ed. Marc Gaborieau (Paris: L'Ecole des Hautes 'Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1986), pp. 62-63, and Simon Digby, "The Sufi *Shaykh* and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India", *Iran*, vol. 28 (1990), pp. 71-75.

¹³⁷ In the words of Werbner and Basu, the Sufi notion of *wilāyat* refers to "spiritual dominions controlled by famous saints, but these also have an organized temporal, spatial and social realization. Shrines thus represent important landmarks in the sacred geography of Islam in South Asia. Symbolically, their spatial ordering often mirrors the sacred pilgrimage centres of Islam in Mecca and Madina." Pnina Werbner and Helena Basu, "The Embodiment of Charisma" in *Embodying Charisma*, ed. Werbner and Basu, p. 12.

¹³⁸ The *qutb* is assisted by two *imāms*, under whom work four *awtāds*, and seven *abdāls*. See details in Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, Urdu trans. 'Allāmah Ṣā'im Chishtī (Faisalabad: 'Alī Brothers, 1986), pp. 56-57. For details of the Sufi hierarchy, see also al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 214, 147, 229, and Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-Uns min Ḥaḍarāt al-Quds*, p. 15.

an exhaustive narration of all cases of Sufis' interaction with the state; rather its purpose is to merely highlight the critical issues in this regard.

While studying the patterns of Sufi behaviour vis-à-vis the state, one may raise a number of questions: whether the Sufis of the early era represented a homogenous group in terms of their beliefs and practices, particularly as far as their relationship with the political authorities was concerned? What was the doctrinal position of the Sufis regarding questions of political power and authority? How far was the Sufis' response towards political authorities rooted in their doctrines?

The relationship of the Sufis with political authorities is a complex phenomenon. Its complexity lies in the diverse responses of the Sufis to politically engage the state or to refrain from it. There were different approaches to this among the Sufis of various regions and *silsilahs*. Many Sufis avoided any contact with the kings and nobles, and discouraged any association with the political authorities among their fellow Sufis. On the contrary, many Sufis saw their engagement with the political authority as a means of positively affecting the behaviour of the king and nobility, as well as the state policies. It shows that the response of the Sufis to the political authorities was not homogenous, as the actions and behaviour of the Sufis was quite diverse in this regard. Similarly, some of the rulers sought counsel of the Sufis for their personal conduct as well as in state affairs, some thought it better to keep their hands off the Sufis and leave them and their *khānqāhs* undisturbed, whereas some rulers tried to regulate and control the Sufis as well.

Sufis' relationship with the state has generally been treated under two broad themes, namely, the conflictual or oppositional relationship, and cordial or friendly relationship. But these two categories typify two extremes, which obviously blur the richness and complexity of the phenomenon. Moreover, the fact that in Islam the political authority remained closely associated with the religious authority, epitomized by the '*ulamā*', jurists and theologians, further adds to the complexity of the issue.

To begin with the role of the custodians of religious authority, it is misleading to assume the '*ulamā*' of the early Islamic era as a fairly distinct group, as they were loosely defined and were unstructured as well.¹³⁹ Like the Sufis, the '*ulamā*', jurists and theologians were also heterogeneous in terms of their beliefs and doctrines, legal preferences, and approaches to the state, rulers and political authorities. Those who were closely allied with the state naturally influenced the rulers as well as the official policies. Therefore, the relationship between the '*ulamā*', jurists and theologians, and the Sufis was quite crucial in shaping official policies regarding the Sufis.

Historically, the relationship between the Sufis and the 'externalist' '*ulamā*', jurists and theologians had hardly been cordial. The latter were the traditional custodians of religious authority, and were in most cases allied with the state.¹⁴⁰ Their insistence on, and preoccupation with, the outward forms and exoteric aspect of religion stood in sharp contrast to the Sufi doctrines emphasizing the internal and esoteric dimensions of the same. Some of the views of the Sufis were considered to be blasphemous by the '*ulamā*',

¹³⁹ Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, p. 137.

¹⁴⁰ See Introduction in Nikki R. Keddie, ed., *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 3.

and it was this reason that the former used poetry, which not only made it easier to express complicated Sufi beliefs, but also helped conceal some of the Sufi ideas.¹⁴¹ Similarly, the approach of the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis towards the issues pertaining to morality was also radically different from each other.¹⁴² It was for this reason that the latter perceived the former as those “concerned more with the husks than with the kernel of truth.”¹⁴³

In addition to the crystallization of schools of *fiqh*, the increasing formalism in matters of *Shari‘ah*, and exclusive emphasis on the exoteric aspects of Islam had increased the importance and prestige of the ‘*ulamā*’ in the Muslim society. Moreover, the ‘Abbāsid regime had employed ‘*ulamā*’ on the administrative, juridical and even executive positions of the state. These developments led to the conclusion that the ‘*ulamā*’ were the sole interpreters of the revealed message of Islam, and they had the exclusive monopoly on interpretation of *Shari‘ah*. “Had they been allowed,” according to Danner, “to go along in such a fashion, with no opposition to their claims, Islam would have seen something similar to what took place in early Christianity, when the official church stamped out all spiritual esoterism that claimed an independent existence for

¹⁴¹ E. A. Bertels, *Sufism i Sufiyskaia Literatura*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 60-61, as cited in E. A. Poliakova, “Some Problems of Sufi Studies”, *Islamic Culture*, Lahore, vol. LXI, no. 3 (July, 1987), p. 74.

¹⁴² In this regard, the approach of the ‘*ulamā*’ has been termed as teleological, as they generally determine the rightness or wrongness of an action solely by its consequences—in this world and in the life hereafter. On the contrary, the Sufis’ approach may be termed as deontological as they tried to assess the human actions morally by the motives and intentions of the people. Tanvir Anjum, “Moral Training by the Mystics: Strategies and Methodologies”, *Historicus*, Quarterly Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, vol. XLVI, no. 1 (Jan-Mar 1998), p. 77.

¹⁴³ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam*, p. 403.

itself.”¹⁴⁴ In these circumstances, the Sufis asserted themselves, and claimed that they represented the esoteric aspect of Islam.

As the Sufi doctrines and practices started getting clearly articulated, misgivings and doubts regarding them appeared in the circles of the ‘externalist’ ‘*ulamā*’, jurists and theologians. Though most of the Sufis were respectful to the *Sharī‘ah*, and their personal conduct was in perfect conformity with it, some of the Sufi groups indulged in flagrant violation of the norms of the society and the injunctions of *Sharī‘ah*. They were generally referred to as *malāmatīs* (literally meaning the blameworthy). They deliberately led an outrageous life in order to conceal their spiritual achievements from others. Not only the ‘*ulamā*’, jurists and theologians, but the more sober Sufi circles too did not approve them. Al-Hujwīrī’s assertion has been mentioned earlier, where he disapproved of two such Sufi groups.¹⁴⁵

The institutionalization of the *silsilahs* gave Sufism a wide-ranging appeal. The *silsilahs* made the Shaykhs or the Sufi masters the locus of religious authority for the people in general, and for their disciples in particular, which further undermined the traditional authority of the juristic leaders, theologians and ‘*ulamā*’ in the realm of religion. In a sense, the Sufis emerged as a parallel locus of religious authority, as the exclusive monopoly of the ‘*ulamā*’ over religious authority was challenged by the Sufis, who were regarded by their disciples as the sole authority in all matters.

¹⁴⁴ Danner, “The Early Development of Sufism” in *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Spirituality*, ed. Nasr, vol. I, *Foundations*, p. 255.

¹⁴⁵ See note 101 (supra).

The historical events regarding the relationship of the Sufis and the political authorities can hardly be generalized owing to the diversity of their responses to each other. On the one hand, we come across evidence of the state extending patronage to the Sufi establishment, and the Sufis acting as allies of the Sultans and accepting official titles and designations, but on the other, we have legendary figures among the Sufis such as al-Ḥallāj, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī and Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī, who were executed by the political authorities, and which earned them the epithet of ‘martyrs’. Given below is a brief overview of the Sufis’ relationship with the political authorities.

As pointed out earlier, the eleventh century marks the triumph of Sunni traditionalism in the wake of the Shī‘ite Buwayhids’ ouster from power, and the Sunnite Seljūqids assuming political authority in the ‘Abbāsīd Empire. The Seljūqids were in dire need of support from the varied segments of society, in order to assert and firmly establish their political authority. Moreover, being staunch Sunnis themselves, they tried to reassert the authority of Sunni Islam. The institutions of *madrasahs* and *khānqāhs* played a crucial role in this regard, as they were patronized and supported by the Seljūq rulers and the ruling elite. In addition to the Seljūqids, the Zingid and the Ayyūbid rulers, as well as their lieutenants and successors, not only constructed *khānqāhs*, but supported the Sufi establishment as well. In this way, not only did these regimes strengthen their hold on power, but this official patronage, in the opinion of Trimingham, made Sufi establishment more ‘respectable’ in the eyes of the people.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 9.

On its basis, one may discern and infer that the Sufi-state relationship was two-way, and in addition to Sufis being a source of legitimacy for the political authorities, the state patronage could also extend legitimacy to Sufism, and help the Sufis win social approval and acclaim. The Sultans and *amīrs*, particularly the Seljūq rulers, supported the existing *khānqāhs*, and granted them endowments, which opened the way for the direct interference of the state in their affairs.

In fact, many Sufis tactfully used their association with the political authorities as a means of influencing the behaviour of the Caliphs or kings and the *umarā'*, as well as their state policies in a positive and constructive way. On the other hand, the political authorities benefited from the social acclaim of the Sufis in order to overcome political problems. An outstanding example in this regard is that of the founder of the Suhrawardiyyah *Silsilah*, Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Abū 'l-Qāhir al-Suhrawardī, who had close and very cordial relations with the Caliphs of Baghdad. He enjoyed such prestige and honour that if anybody sought shelter in his *ribāṭ* (Sufi dwelling) he could not be forcibly taken away even by a Caliph or a Sultan.¹⁴⁷ His nephew, Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, who is considered to be the real founder of the Suhrawardī *Silsilah*, served as the envoy of, and chief religious adviser to, 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Nāṣir (r. 1180-1225). According to al-Suhrawardī, the authority of the Caliph over his subjects, and as mediator between his people and God was conceived in terms parallel to that of the authority of a Sufi Shaykh over his disciples.¹⁴⁸ The Caliph not only

¹⁴⁷ Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 252.

¹⁴⁸ Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, p. 241. See some details of Caliph al-Nāṣir's theory of the Caliphate in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. VII, art. Al-Nāṣir Li-Dīn Allāh by Angelika Hartmann, pp. 999-1000.

founded *khānqāhs* in Baghdad, but also appointed the Shaykh as the director of many *khānqāhs*. Together they initiated a program of political and religious, or more accurately, spiritual reform in the state. Apart from other efforts, a systematic reformation of Sufi *silsilahs* was also initiated. Caliph al-Nāṣir himself founded at least six *khānqāhs* in Baghdad, and appointed al-Suhrawardī as the director of several other *khānqāhs* established by others,¹⁴⁹ which symbolized the subordination of the Sufis to the political authorities. The Caliph also controlled the appointment of director to other *khānqāhs*. The Shaykh also helped the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs in their hour of need. For instance, when Khwārizm Shāh, Muḥammad II, invaded Baghdad in 1217-18, it was the Shaykh who dissuaded him from attacking the city.¹⁵⁰

In the twelfth century, another pattern of State-Sufi relationship is found in the Mamlūk State in Egypt, a semi-autonomous kingdom and an appendage of the ‘Abbāsīds. On one hand, the Mamlūk Sultans were in dire need of legitimacy for their rule, and so they sought the help of the Sufis for consolidation of their political authority. On the other hand, fearful of the growing influence of the Sufis in Egypt, they also tried to control and regulate them as well. Under the Mamlūks in Egypt, the Shaykhs of *khānqāhs* were given appointments by the state. The Mamlūk Sultans used to confer the title of *Shaykh al-Shuyūkh* (literally meaning master of the masters) to the heads of various *khānqāhs*. The *Shaykh al-Shuyūkh* also exercised authority over other Sufi establishments in the Mamlūk State. Like the official title of *Shaykh al-Islām* in India, it was more of an

¹⁴⁹ Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, pp. 241-42.

¹⁵⁰ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. VII, art. Al-Nāṣir Li-Dīn Allāh by Hartmann, p. 997.

honorific nature, and did not imply any specific role and responsibilities.¹⁵¹ In addition, there existed *khānqāhs* in various parts of the Muslim world, including Egypt and Syria, which were officially supported. Since they were constructed or managed by the state, the government used to appoint their directors as well. As a result, the people who were made the directors of these *khānqāhs*, were not necessarily Sufis. Even Ibn Khaldūn was appointed the director of *Khānqāh* Baybars in 1392. The buildings were, in fact, *awqāf* endowments, and some of the former *wazīrs* were made in-charge of *khānqāhs* as well.¹⁵²

Owing to these developments, the interference of the state in lives and *khānqāhs* of the Sufis increased manifold. It had an adverse impact on the development of Sufism, as in such circumstances not only many Sufi imposters made fortunes, the autonomy of the *khānqāhs* was compromised, and the Sufis were also drawn into political affairs. Moreover, symbiotic relationship between the Sufis and the rulers implied the subordination of the Sufis to the political authorities.

Having briefly surveyed the symbiotic relationship between the Sufis and the rulers, it is useful to turn to the other side of the picture. Contrary to the Sufis who enjoyed cordial relations with the rulers, there were many Sufis whose relationship with the political authorities was not comfortable or smooth. Their responses to the rulers ranged from the Sufis' indifference to political affairs, to conflict with the political authorities leading to the execution of some of the Sufis.

¹⁵¹ Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 18.

¹⁵² For details, see *ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

To begin with the early Sufis, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī did not enjoy a smooth relationship with the political authorities. According to ‘Aṭṭār, once he was delivering a sermon, and Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 714), the Umayyad Governor of Iraq, came there with his troops. Ḥasan continued his sermon without paying any attention or respect to Ḥajjāj.¹⁵³ Since he used to boldly criticized the repressive policies of Ḥajjāj, consequently, he was forced to go into hiding till Ḥajjāj’s death as the governor had ordered his arrest.¹⁵⁴ During the reign of Umayyad Caliph ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 717-19), Ḥasan is reported to have written a letter to the Caliph warning him against the false hopes and expectations of the world, and cherished the values of hunger and voluntary poverty, and branded wealth as an evil.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, on another occasion, Ḥasan is reported to have warned the governor of Basra Ibn-i Hubayrah to fear God more than the Caliph, since God could protect him against the Caliph, but the Caliph could not protect him against God.¹⁵⁶ An episode from the life of Mālik ibn Dīnār informs that he was not afraid to restrain his licentious neighbour, who had himself declared that no one had the power to check him as he was the Sultan’s favourite.¹⁵⁷ Mālik ibn Dīnār’s actions displayed disregard of and fearlessness of political authorities. Another celebrated early Sufi was Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, who was initially a Prince of Balkh, but had abandoned royal grandeur to choose

¹⁵³ Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā’*, ed. Mirzā Muḥammad Khān Qazvīnī, Introduction by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Qazvīnī, 2 vols in one. (n.p.: Kitābkhānah-i Markazī, 1344 Solar A.H.), vol. 1, pp. 37-38.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 88-89. ‘Aṭṭār also mentions that once Ḥajjāj’s men came searching for him, and he sought refuge in Ḥabīb ‘Ajāmī’s cell. Idem, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā’*, vol. 1, p. 59.

¹⁵⁵ Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, pp. 33-34. ‘Aṭṭār also refers to correspondence between the two, in which Ḥasan gave good counsel to the Caliph. Idem, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā’*, vol. 1, pp. 39-40.

¹⁵⁶ Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 79; for some details of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s political attitude, see pp. 77-81.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā’*, vol. 1, p. 50.

the austere Sufi way of life. He refused to accept a lavish cash offering from a wealthy person, and preferred poverty to riches.¹⁵⁸

The second 'Abbāsīd Caliph, Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (r. 754-75), is said to have selected the names of four eminent Sufis and scholars, from whom one was to be selected for appointment as the *qāḍī* of Baghdad. These included Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mis'ar ibn Kidām, the famous jurist Abū Ḥanīfah Nawmān ibn Thābit (d. 767) and Shurayḥ. Sufyān fled away and went into hiding to escape persecution by the Caliph, Mis'ar pretended to be mad before the Caliph, while Abū Ḥanīfah refused to accept the offer. Finally, Shurayḥ had to accept the post of *qāḍī*.¹⁵⁹

The 'Abbāsīd Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809) sought counsel from the eminent Sufis of his time. In Caliph Hārūn's conversation with Fuḍayl ibn 'Ayād, as recorded by Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. 1220) in *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, not only Fuḍayl refused to accept the offering of a thousand *dīnārs* (gold coins) from the Caliph, but also had the temerity to severely reprimand the Caliph regarding the abuse of power. Fuḍayl also exhorted Hārūn to dispense justice, consider his high office to be a trial and fear God, and be wary of the flattery of advisors and associates.¹⁶⁰ In a similar vein, Hārūn's meeting with Shaqīq al-Balkhī has also been recorded by 'Aṭṭār. The Caliph was advised to display trustiness like Abū Bakr, discrimination between truth and falsehood like 'Umar, modesty and nobility like 'Uthmān, and knowledge and justice like 'Alī.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁵⁹ See details in al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 93-94.

¹⁶⁰ For details of their meeting, see 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 1, pp. 80-82.

¹⁶¹ For details see Ibid., pp. 182-83.

Similarly, ‘Aṭṭār mentions the meeting of Hārūn and Abū Yūsuf with Dā’wd al-Ṭā’ī, when on the Caliph’s demand Dā’wd admonished him, and upon hearing him, the Caliph wept copiously. Dā’wd al-Ṭā’ī also refused to accept offerings from the Caliph.¹⁶² Imām Ghazzālī had taken an oath at the tomb of Prophet Ibrāhīm that he would never visit a royal court, nor accept any grant from a king.¹⁶³ In this way, the early Sufis refused to be beneficiaries of the state, and thus avoided any identification with the political authorities. In the words of Hodgson:

The refusal of some Sufis to permit any association with the amir’s court served to underline the alternative social outlook. It was as if the court were carefully quarantined so as to minimize its influence. Thus Sufism supplemented the Shari’ah as a principle of unity and order, offering the Muslims a sense of spiritual unity which came to be stronger than that provided by the remnant of the caliphate.¹⁶⁴

Sufism was perceived as a threat or a challenge to the power and authority of the ‘*ulamā*’ and jurists, and that was why one comes across tension between Sufism and juristic Islam in the medieval period. Many Sufis were accused of heresy, and were awarded punishments by the political authorities as well. ‘Aṭṭār has dealt with Sufyān al-Thawrī’s troublesome relationship with the Caliph who had ordered his execution, but it was preempted by the accidental death of the Caliph.¹⁶⁵

Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī was arrested on charge of heresy, taken to Baghdad, and thrown in prison. Later he was brought before the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847-61), where he answered all the charges leveled against him. Upon hearing him, the

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 204.

¹⁶³ Muḥammad Shibli Naumānī, *Al-Ghazzālī (Imām Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ghazzālī kī Sawāniḥ ‘Umri)* (Lahore: Maktabah-’i Dīn-o Dunyā, 1959), pp. 46-47.

¹⁶⁴ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*, p. 221.

¹⁶⁵ For details of the incident, see ‘Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā*’, vol. 1, pp. 174-75.

Caliph burst into tears, became his disciple, ordered his release and allowed him to return to Cairo.¹⁶⁶ In 874 another Sufī, Sahl al-Tustarī, was compelled by the political authorities to seek refuge in Basra.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Ghulām Khalīl (d. 888 A.D./275 A.H.), a staunch Ḥanbalite confidant of an ‘Abbāsīd Caliph, was hostile to the Sufīs and accused them of heresy. He approached the Caliph and urged him to order the arrest of Abū Ḥamzah, Raqqam, Abū Bakr Shiblī, Abū ‘l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī and Junayd al-Baghdādī. After their arrest, the Caliph ordered them to be slain. However, later their beliefs were scrutinized by a *qāḍī* (judge), who acquitted them. Eventually, the Caliph dismissed them with honour.¹⁶⁸

The ninth-century Sufi-scholar and renowned jurist Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855) became the unfortunate victim of *miḥna* (investigation of beliefs) led by the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mu‘taṣim Bi-Allāh (r. 833-42). The practice of *miḥna*, requiring the people as well as the religious notables to publicly profess the doctrine of the ‘createdness’ of the Quran, was initiated by Caliph al-Māmūn under the influence of Mu‘tazilite thought. However, after al-Māmūn, Caliphs al-Wāthiq Bi-Allāh (r. 842-47) and al-Mu‘taṣim continued the practice. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was subjected to imprisonment and torture. Though he was feeble and quite old, he was put to a rack and flogged but he stood firm, and refused to conform to the Mu‘tazilite doctrines.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ See details in *Ibid.*, pp. 117-18.

¹⁶⁷ See Arberry’s introductory note to extracts from Sahl’s life and teachings, Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Awliya*, pp. 153, 157.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliya*, vol. 2, p. 41.

¹⁶⁹ For a detailed study, see W. M. Patton, *Ahmed ibn Hanbal and the Mihna* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1897).

1.6.1 'The Sufi Martyrs'

Some of the eminent Sufis were executed by the political authorities, and for this reason they earned the title of 'martyrs'. Apparently, they were executed for their bold doctrinal expressions for they were accused of undermining the fundamental beliefs of Muslim faith.¹⁷⁰ This only partially corresponds to reality, as the political considerations behind their execution figured quite prominently. In addition to the charges of polytheism or *shirk* and holding unconventional views, they were accused of professing Ismā'ilism or having sympathies for Ismā'ilīs. In fact, in those days Ismā'ilism posed a political threat to the 'Abbāsīd political authorities in the form of the rival Fāṭimid Caliphate or the Assassins of Iran and Syria. Given below is a brief account of three eminent Sufis, who were executed by the political authorities:

1.6.1.1 Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj

Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr 'al-Ḥallāj', literally meaning a cotton carder (b. 857-d. 922), has emerged as a legendary figure among the Sufis. He was kept in prison for eight years before he was executed in 922 for having uttered apparently blasphemous words *anā al-Haqq* "I am the Truth" (*al-Haqq* being one of the names of God). This apparently self-divinizing cry, tantamount to *shirk* (polytheism) in the eyes of the 'externalist' 'ulamā', jurists and theologians, was in fact, a proclamation of his identity with God. Nonetheless, it would be grossly incorrect to assume that merely the words uttered in a state of spiritual ecstasy by al-Ḥallāj led to his execution during the reign of 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-

¹⁷⁰ It has been argued that a Sufi may be said to have two centres of consciousness: one human and one Divine. He may speak now from one and now from the other, which accounts for certain apparent contradictions in Sufi utterances. Lings, *What is Sufism?*, p. 14.

Muqtadir (r. 908-932).¹⁷¹ The critics of al-Ḥallāj at the court of Baghdad accused him of sectarian affiliation with the Qarāmaṭīs, as some of the al-Ḥallāj's ideas bore some resemblance with those of Ismā'īlīs, but as a matter of fact it was his alleged political association with the Qarāmaṭīs, for which he was punished. The Qarāmaṭīs had established their independent state in Baḥrayn in the early tenth century,¹⁷² which naturally threatened the 'Abbāsīd political authority.

1.6.1.2 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī

An early twelfth-century Sufi-scholar, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī (b. 1098-d. 1131) had received training in Sufism as well as philosophy. He was executed for his unconventional beliefs, as propounded in his works, regarding prophethood, life hereafter, such as his denial of the physical hell and paradise, saying that they were mere parables coined for common people, and other charges accusing him of pantheism. He was put in prison for few months, released and then later executed in 1131 at the age of 33.¹⁷³ Apart from his controversial theological formulations, the political authorities were suspicious of his ideas which bore similarity with Ismā'īlīs, and were considered a political threat.

¹⁷¹ For a detailed study, see Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, Eng. trans. Herbert Mason, 4 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). For a brief summary of the criticism aimed at al-Ḥallāj's doctrines, see Louis Massignon, "The Juridical Consequences of the Doctrines of Al-Ḥallāj", Eng. trans. Herbert Mason, in *Studies on Islam*, ed. Merlin L. Swartz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 148-54.

¹⁷² For a brief history, see Wilferd Madelung, "The Fatimids and the Qarmatis of Bahrayn" in *Mediaeval Isma'ili History and Thought*, ed. Farhad Daftary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 21-73.

¹⁷³ See Hamadānī's own apologia written in prison titled 'Complaint of a Stranger Exiled from Home' in A. J. Arberry, *A Sufi Martyr: The Apologia of 'Ain al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī*, [sic] Eng. trans. with Introduction and Notes (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969). See also Carl Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1985), pp. 110-15.

1.6.1.3 Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī

Another Twelfth-century Sufi-scholar, Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī (b. 1153-d. 1191) was executed in 1191 at the age of 38. His epithet *al-Maqtūl*, meaning ‘he who is killed’ is used to distinguish him from other Sufis of the same *silsilah*. He was also known as *Shaykh al-Ishrāq*, the master of illumination. He taught at the court of Qilīj Arsalān II and his son. Having mastery in both philosophy and Sufism, he wrote many theosophical works, which spurred vehement criticism and made him a controversial figure among the jurists as well as some of the Sufi circles. He used to expose his esoteric ideas in an outspoken manner. Moreover, his relationship with Prince Malik al-Zāhir (d. 1218) also excited the jealousy of the contemporary ‘*ulamā*’ and jurists associated with the court at Aleppo.

Al-Suhrawardī’s philosophy of illumination, which drew heavily on neo-Platonic speculation and Zoroastrian imagery, had considerable influence on latter Twelver Shī‘ism. At the instigation of the ‘*ulamā*’ of Aleppo, he was tried and executed by Malik al-Zāhir on the orders of his father, the Ayyūbid Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Salādīn) (d. 1193). In fact, the later was more concerned about the political threat which he perceived in the teachings of al-Suhrawardī, which bore some similarity with Ismā‘īlī doctrines. Moreover, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn after recapturing Syria from the Crusaders, needed the support of the jurists and ‘*ulamā*’ in order to maintain his political authority, and so he succumbed to their demands, and al-Suhrawardī was put to death.¹⁷⁴ Thus, the reasons for his

¹⁷⁴ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardi, Ibn ‘Arabi* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1988), pp. 52-82.

imprisonment and subsequent death were not merely theological in nature, but were political as well.

In addition to the historical data cited above, there are very few instances when the Sufis had a violent clash with the political authorities. For instance, during the reign of the last Seljūqid ruler, Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn (r. 1236-59), a Sufi named Baba Iliyās al-Khurāsānī of Amasia is said to have instigated a *darvēsh* revolt. The revolt was suppressed, and the Baba was killed in a general massacre of the Sufis.¹⁷⁵ Such occasions were relatively rare in the early centuries as compared to the later times, when many Sufis and Sufi groups clashed with the colonial states in Asia and Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁷⁶ This, however, deals with a period beyond the scope of the present study.

¹⁷⁵ See Introduction by Rose in Brown, *The Darvishes or Oriental Spiritualism*, p. xx.

¹⁷⁶ For instance, Ernest Gellner highlights the role of Ahansal Sufis, who resisted the first colonial advance of the French in Africa, and even defeated the French-aided troops of local rulers in 1922. Idem, *Saints of the Atlas*. Dale F. Eickelman discusses the activities of *darvēshes*, who played key religious, political and economic roles in North African society, particularly in Morocco from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Idem, *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Centre* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1976). Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush have discussed the political and social activity of the Sufi *silsilahs* in Soviet Union, particularly of the Naqashbandī Sufis, who headed the resistance to the Buddhist (Oirots and Kalmuks) and Russian invaders in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Idem, *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985). Similarly, Serif Mardin focuses on the political role of Badī' al-Zamān Sa'īd Nūrsī (b. 1876-d. 1960), the founder of Nūr Movement in Turkish politics, which posed a political threat first to the Ottoman rulers and then to the Turkish authorities. Idem, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). However, this is not to deny the fact that many Sufis collaborated with the colonial governments to help consolidate their rule in colonized regions by acting as intermediaries. For instance, see Sarah F. D. Ansari, who discusses the role of the Sufi *pīrs* of Sindh during the colonial era, and informs how they played the role of 'intermediaries' between the colonial rulers and the populace, and helped the British consolidate their power in Sindh. Since the British system of political control was based on patronage and public distribution of honour, these *pīrs* benefited from the system. Moreover, the work also sheds light on the resistance offered to the colonial regime by the *pīrs* and their followers during the 1890s and later during the *Khilāfat* Movement between 1919 and 1924, which posed the "first real collective challenge issued to the British rule by Sind's religious leadership". Idem, *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sind, 1843-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 8.

It can be inferred from the above discussion that there were varied patterns of interaction between the Sufis and the state. On the one hand, there were diverse patterns of Sufi responses towards the state and political authorities, ranging from alliance and collaboration with the intent to reform the polity, to criticism on the personal and political conduct of the rulers and violent clash and conflict with the political authorities. On the other hand, the policy of the rulers and political authorities was also not consistent; rather it exhibited quite diverse patterns. Some rulers enjoyed quite friendly and cordial relations with the Sufis, and also extended them official patronage, offered them official positions and grants as well as support for their *khānqāhs*. However, many of them perceived the Sufis as a threat to their political authority, and thus tried to control and contain them, and make them subordinate to the state. Some of them even coerced the Sufis into accepting the official theological doctrines.

Similarly, Claudia Liebeskind focuses on three Sufi shrines of Awadh in northern India, viz., *Takiyah Sharīf* (Kākōrī), *Khānqāh Karimiyyah* (Salōn), and the shrine of Ḥājī Wārith Shāh (Dēvā), and analyzes their survival in colonial era. The work identifies the responses of the Sufis of the three spiritual centres to the Colonial State, which had introduced certain changes that brought about tensions between these Sufis and the State, and examines how these Sufis coped with the changes and subsequent tensions. Idem, *Piety on its Knees*.

CHAPTER 2

Emergence of Muslim Rule in India, and Political Authority in the Delhi Sultanate

The establishment and the nature of authority in the Muslim Sultanate of Delhi could be traced to several factors, such as the early military expeditions in the western peripheral regions of India during the rule of the Pious Caliphs (632-661) and the Umayyad rule (661-750); peaceful Arab penetration in the coastal regions of India, and the more decisive developments relating to the weakening of the authority of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate in the face of rise of the regional military leaders. Weakening of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate had two fold importance: Muslim thinkers had to reaffirm the role of the Caliph in a polity claiming to be based on *Sharī‘ah*, and at the same time justify the phenomenon of the Sultans, the actual power holders in the outer regions of the empires. An influential position regarding the issue was stated by al-Ghazzālī wherein the Caliph came to symbolize the sanctity and post-Prophet continuity of *Khilāfat* or Imamate, the Sultan having an effective role in providing environment conducive for the practice of *Sharī‘ah*, and the ‘*ulamā*’ to interpret the content of the *Sharī‘ah*.

The present chapter is divided into two sections: the first deals with the emergence and gradual consolidation of Muslim rule in India, while the second focuses on the characteristics of political authority in the Sultanate of Delhi. It serves as

background to the ensuing discussion on the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi in India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Section I Emergence of Muslim Rule in India

In order to trace the origin of Muslim rule in India, it is important to begin with the rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, and the subsequent political and military developments taking place in the early Islamic era. These developments drastically alerted the political frontiers in the entire Near East, and even beyond. Within less than a century, some of the western peripheral regions of India came under the political sway of the Muslims. Nonetheless, the process of expansion, which was once quite swift, was greatly decelerated, and it took another five centuries for the Muslim rule to establish firmly in the Indian heartland. What follows is a brief account of how Muslim rule was established in India as a result of a protracted process stretching over centuries.

2.1 Military Expeditions in the Western Peripheral Regions of India under the Pious Caliphs and the Umayyads

In the wake of the dawn of Islam in Arabia, the disparate Arab tribes were integrated under the leadership of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) (b. 569-d. 632), which led to the emergence of a new political order in the region. After his migration to Medinah in 622,

he founded a state, and assumed its political leadership as well.¹ It was followed by the conversion to Islam and political submission of many tribes to the State of Medinah. There also began successive military clashes with the Makkans, who were the arch-enemies of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). Before his demise, hostilities with the Byzantine and the Sasanian Empires had broken out as well, since the tribes in the peripheral regions of Arabia were instigated by these Empires to create trouble for the embryonic Muslim state. After the Prophet's demise, during the reign of the Pious Caliphs and the Umayyads, the Muslim state underwent major territorial expansion.

The first Pious Caliph, Abū Bakr (r. 632-34), concentrated upon the suppression of insurgent and refractory tribes. However, the reign of the second Caliph of Islam, 'Umar (r. 634-44), witnessed the first wave of expansion of the 'Caliphal State'² in the wake of conflict with Byzantine Empire in the north-west, and Sasanian Empire in the north-east. The territorial stretch of the Muslim state was significantly enhanced by annexation of large areas in Syria, Iraq and Persia.³ Towards the close of the reign of Caliph 'Umar, in 644, Ḥakam ibn 'Amr Taghlibī conquered Makran,⁴ which included the

¹ For a detailed description and analysis, see Muhammad Hamidullah, *The Emergence of Islam*, ed. and Eng. trans. Afzal Iqbal (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, and Da'wah Academy, International Islamic University, 1999 rpt., first published 1993), pp. 151-59.

² The term 'Caliphal State' has been used to refer exclusively to the State ruled by the Pious Caliphs (*khulafā'-i Rāshidīn*), and not by the self-styled Umayyad and 'Abbasid Caliphs afterwards.

³ For a detailed study, see Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān*, Eng. trans. Philip K. Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State* (New York: Columbia University, 1916), vol. I, see part II on Syria, part III on Mesopotamia, and part IV on al-Iraq and Persia, pp. 165-300, 385-466. See also Fred McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), chaps. III and IV, pp. 91-220.

⁴ Muḥammad Shiblī Naumānī, *Al-Fārūq--Sawānih 'Umri-'i Ḥaḍrat 'Umar Fārūq* (Lahore: Sajjād Publishers, 1960), pp. 217-18.

vast areas of what is nowadays a part of Balochistan.⁵ Thus, it was during the Pious Caliphate, that Makran, which lay on the western fringes of India, came under the political sway of the Muslims.

In addition, historical evidence suggests that ‘Uthmān ibn Abī al-‘Āṣ Thaqaḫī, the Governor of Bahrayn and Oman, sent a fleet to the coastal regions of Thānāh (near Bombay) and Broach (in Gulf of Cambay) via Oman under the command of his brother Ḥakam ibn Abī al-‘Āṣ Thaqaḫī. But this naval expedition was sent without the permission of the reigning Caliph ‘Umar, who, upon hearing this, forbade undertaking naval expeditions for the time being. The Governor of Bahrayn also sent one expedition to Dēbul, a port in Sindh, under his brother Mughīrah ibn Abī al-‘Āṣ Thaqaḫī.⁶ Nonetheless, according to Mubārakpurī, the purpose of these two expeditions was not territorial subjugation and annexation; rather they were meant to prevent their rulers from helping the Persians against the Muslim armies.⁷

During the reign of the third Caliph, ‘Uthmān (r. 644-56), an important cantonment in the region bordering Sindh and Balochistan, named Qandābīl (presently known as Gandāvā, and situated in District Kachī) was consolidated, but no new military expeditions were undertaken. It was, however, during the reign of Caliph ‘Alī (r. 656-61) that Thāghar ibn Zu‘ar was appointed on the Indian frontier, and a military expedition

⁵ In those days, the name Balochistan was not being used to refer to any geographical area. The adjoining regions of Sindh in its west included Makran and Sīstān.

⁶ Muḥammad Aslam, *Muḥammad ibn Qāsim aur uskē Jānashīn* (Lahore: Rīyyād Brothers, 1996), p. 21.

⁷ Qāḫī Aṭṭar Mubārakpurī, *Khilāfat-i Rāshidah aur Hindustān* (Delhi: Nadwat al-Muṣannifīn, 1972), p. 103.

was sent to Kīkān or Qīqān (modern Qalat in Balochistan) under him, who defeated the local ruler of the region.⁸ Owing to internal dissension and political instability, further expansion was halted.

The Muslim state continued to expand further under the Umayyads. During the reign of its founder, Amīr Mu‘awiyah (r. 661-80), a number of expeditions to Makran and Sindh were led by various military commanders and/or local governors: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sawār al-‘Abdī was sent to Kīkān, and Sinān ibn Salamah al-Hazlī was sent to Bodhīa (near Lake Mancher, presently situated in District Dadu), while Muhallab ibn Abī Ṣufrah ‘Aḍḍī reached Multan via Khyber Pass in the north. Another expedition was led by Abūḥū-Ash‘ath Mundhar ibn Jārūd.⁹ Many of these expeditions were meant to reconquer these areas, or to put down local insurgencies and rebellions. However, as a result, some parts of Makran and Sindh were conquered and annexed to the Umayyad Empire.

Nonetheless, it was during the reign of Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd (r. 705-15) that the second wave of conquest began, and the process of territorial expansion gained considerable impetus. His interest lay chiefly in westward and northward expansion, where large territories in Central Asia, North Africa and Spain were conquered and annexed. Expansion in the east could get little attention as compared to the westward and

⁸ ‘Alī ibn Hāmid ibn Abī Bakr al-Kūfī, *Fathnāmah-i Sindh (Chachnāmah)*, Persian trans., and ed. with Introduction, Notes and commentary Nabī Bakhsh Khān Balōch (Islamabad: Institute of Islamic History, Culture and Civilization, 1983), pp. 54-55. This expedition has not been mentioned in any other contemporary or near contemporary source.

⁹ For details of the military expeditions in Sindh and Makran, see Saiyyid Abū Ṣafar Nadvī, *Tārīkh-i Sindh* (A‘zamgarh: Ma‘arif Press, 1947), pp. 33-38. See a brief summary in Aslam, *Muḥammad ibn Qāsim aur uskē Jānashīn*, pp. 24-26.

northward expansion. Nonetheless, two separate military expeditions under ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Nabḥān and Budayl were defeated by the forces of Raja Dāhir, the ruler of Sindh.¹⁰

In the narrative of Indian expeditions by the Umayyads, a central figure is that of Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 714), the Governor of Iraq, who was also in-charge of the Eastern Territories including Sīstān. He selected a young general of his own tribe, Banū Thaqīf, named Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-Thaqafī, for the purpose of undertaking a military expedition in Sindh in 711. The causes of Arab invasion include, *inter alia*, help of the Persians by the rulers of Sindh and Makran against the Muslims, shelter given to rebel groups such as ‘Alāfīs by Raja Dāhir, and growing activities of pirates in Indian Ocean hampering sea trade. However, the immediate cause was the plunder of eight merchant vessels by pirates near Dēbul (a coastal town in Sindh), which were carrying the families of the Arab settlers who had died in Sarandīp (Sri Lanka), and gifts from the King of Sarandīp for the Umayyad Caliph.

In 711, Muḥammad ibn Qāsim entered Sindh via Makran, which was, as indicated above, under the Umayyad rule. The Muslim forces captured and annexed areas including the cities of Dēbul, Nīrūn (modern Hyderabad), Alōr (the capital of Dāhir’s kingdom situated near modern Rohri), Brahmanabād (later named Manṣūrah), Askalandah (modern Uch), Multan and Bātia (situated near modern Bahawalpur). The forces also proceeded towards Gujrat and Kathīawār, and captured and annexed important cities like

¹⁰ Zafar Nadvī, *Tārīkh-i Sindh*, pp. 42-43, and Aslam, *Muḥammad ibn Qāsim aur uskē Jānashīn*, pp. 31-32.

Kīraj and Bhēlmān.¹¹ The Arab armies went as far as the neighbouring regions of modern Okara, known as Panj-Māhāt in those days.¹² After the death of Ḥajjāj in 714, Muḥammad ibn Qāsīm wanted to proceed further, but Caliph Sulaymān (r. 715-17) called him back in 715.¹³ Muḥammad ibn Qāsīm was replaced by Yazīd ibn Abī Kabshah to manage the affairs of the conquered regions. Thus, in the first quarter of the eighth century, Makran, Sindh including Multan, and Gujrat came under the sway of the Umayyads.

The Muslim rulers in Sindh, Multan and Gujrat did not exercise absolute authority, since, in the words of modern historians, the “sovereignty was shared by different layers of kingly authority.”¹⁴ The Arabs abstained from centralizing power in their hands, and allowed the natives considerable share in power. The conquest of these areas has been perceived by some historians as an isolated and insignificant development in history, “only an episode in the history of India and of Islam, a triumph without results.”¹⁵ However, historical evidence suggests that it had far-reaching political, social, religious and economic consequences for the region. Politically, these western peripheral regions of India came under the sway of the Umayyads, and later ‘Abbāsids.

¹¹ For a detailed survey of the conquest of Sindh, Makran and Gujrat, see Zafar Nadvī, *Tārīkh-i Sindh*, pp. 45-120.

¹² Aslam, *Muḥammad ibn Qāsīm aur uskē Jānashīn*, pp. 34-48.

¹³ In fact, the relationship between Ḥajjāj and Sulaymān had long been antagonistic. However, Ḥajjāj had died before Sulaymān’s accession. After becoming Caliph, Sulaymān not only called Muḥammad ibn Qāsīm back, but he also ordered his execution. Muḥammad ibn Qāsīm and Ḥajjāj belonged to the same clan of Banū Thaqīf. See discussion on Ḥajjāj’s confrontation with Sulaymān and its impact in Zakariyau I. Oseni, “A Study of the Relationship between al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafī and the Marwānīd Royal Family in the Umayyad Era”, *Hamdard Islamicus*, Karachi, vol. X, no. 3 (Autumn, 1987), pp. 20-24; see details in pp. 15-27.

¹⁴ Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1998), p. 27.

¹⁵ Stanley Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India under Muhammedan Rule (A.D. 712-1764)* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1997 rpt., first published 1903), p. 12.

Commercially, trade between India and Arabia expanded considerably after the Arab conquest of Sindh, as the sea routes had now become safe from the pillaging of the pirates. Socially, it created opportunities for interaction and dialogue between the Muslims and the Hindus, which led to the exchange of knowledge and ideas between them. On the religious plane, it gave impetus to the spread of Islam in these regions, a process which had been initiated long before the arrival of the Arab armies and the establishment of Muslim rule in these areas.

2.2 Peaceful Arab Penetration in the Coastal Regions of India

Thousands of years before the dawn of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, the Arab traders had enjoyed commercial relations with the Indians, particularly those inhabiting its coastal areas.¹⁶ These traders used to carry Indian goods, such as spices, to Europe via Syria and Egypt, and carried goods from European markets to India, East Indies (present Indonesia), China and Japan.¹⁷ According to Tara Chand, in pre-Islamic days, these Arab traders had not only established their settlements in many coastal towns and cities of India, but under their influence the Indians of Malabar Coast had also adopted the Arab religion (probably Sabaean).¹⁸

¹⁶ For details, see George Faldo Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Medieval Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), and Qādī Aṭḥar Mubārakpurī, *‘Arab wa Hind ‘ahd-i Risālat Mēṅ* (Delhi: Nadwat al-Muṣannifin, 1965).

¹⁷ Saiyyid Sulaymān Nadvī, *‘Arab wa Hind kē Ta‘llūqāt* (Karachi: Karīm Sons Publishers, 1976), p. 6.

¹⁸ Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (Lahore: Book Traders, 1979), p. 30.

After the birth of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, the commercial activities of the Muslim-Arabs in the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal continued.¹⁹ Meanwhile, new colonies of these traders and sailors kept on mushrooming on the eastern and western coastal regions of India. Historical evidence suggests the presence of such settlements and colonies on the Konkan and Malabar Coasts long before the Arab conquest of Sindh and Gujrat in early eighth century, and the Turkish conquests of eleventh and twelfth centuries. Tara Chand writes on the authority of Rowlandson, that Muslim Arabs first settled on the Malabar Coast about the end of the seventh century.²⁰ The Muslim population of these coast regions included Arabs, as well as local people who had converted to Islam. The spread of Islam among the natives must have received considerable impetus from the conversion of Hindu Pērūmal Raja in 827.²¹ Important ports where Muslim settlements were established included coastal towns in Gujrat region named Khambāyat or Kambāyāh (now known as Cambay) and Hunawar in the Gulf of Cambay, and Seymore (modern Chaul) near Bombay.²² The presence of Arab-Muslims in Sarandīp (Ceylon or Sri Lanka) as early as the beginning of the eighth century is evident from the incident of the plunder of eight merchant vessels carrying the families of the Arab settlers by the pirates.

¹⁹ For details of Arab navigation in the days of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), see Saiyyid Sulaymān Nadvī, *The Arab Navigation*, Eng. trans. Saiyyid Şabāḥ al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1966), pp. 30-39.

²⁰ Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 32.

²¹ See annotation in Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, '*Ajā'ib al-Asfār (Safarnāmah-i Ibn Baṭṭūṭah)*', Urdu trans. and Notes Khān Bahādur Mawlavī Muḥammad Ḥusayn (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1983), p. 292.

²² S. M. Ikram, *History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan*, 3d ed., (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1982), p. 24. For a detailed description of Arab settlements on Coastal Areas of India, see S. M. Ikram, *Āb-i Kauthar* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1952), pp. 45-59.

In addition to these settlements of traders, some of these colonies were inhabited by political refugees, which included, among others, the members of Banū Hāshim. Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, the Governor of Iraq and an arch-enemy of this tribe, had persecuted its members. In order to escape persecution, the Hāshimīs migrated to and settled in colonies on Concan Coast (the south-western coast of India). The descendants of these settlers came to be known as *Navā'it/Navāyat* (derived from *Nau-wārid* or new comer). The descendants of those who settled to the east of Cape Comorin in Tinnevely District of Madras came to be known as the *Labbes*.²³ In addition to these refugees, other groups had also sought refuge in these colonies. Owing to the fear of persecution from the followers of the Shī'ite sub-sect, Ismā'ilism, who ruled Multan during the tenth century,²⁴ many had also migrated to these coastal colonies of India. Moreover, there were early Muslim settlements along the Coromandal Coast as well, which was known to Arabs as Ma'bar. Later, some of the Sufis also migrated and settled in these colonies, where they constructed their *khānqāhs* or Sufi dwellings as well.²⁵

The Arabs had extended their trade to the Bay of Bengal, and commercial activities along the entire coast of Bengal and Burma, from where they carried their trade goods to the islands of Malaysia and Indonesia. A famous port Samandar, situated on the coast of Bengal, finds mention in the accounts of Arab geographers of tenth and twelfth centuries. Long before the penetration of the Turkish conquerors in the region, the Arab

²³ Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, pp. 32-33.

²⁴ Farhad Daftary, *The Ismailis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 180.

²⁵ Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, pp. 20-21.

traders had settled near the coastal region of Chittagong in East Bengal.²⁶ In addition to these coastal areas, we find sizeable Muslim population in nearby islands, including Sarandīp (Ceylon or Sri Lanka) and Maldives as well. According to an epigraphical evidence, the ruler of the Islands of Maldives, along with his subjects, had converted to Islam at the hands of Abū 'l-Barakāt Barbarī of Morocco in the ninth century.²⁷

These Arab settlements became the hub of missionary activities, which facilitated the spread of Islam in these peripheral regions of the Indian sub-continent in a peaceful manner.²⁸ Not only that, these colonies of early settlers also served as bases for the Muslim missionaries, who later spread Islam in Malaya and Indonesia.²⁹ Here it is important to clarify that since the terms 'mission' and 'missionary' have Christian connotations, it should not create an impression that like Christianity, in Islam the propagation of faith is the sole responsibility of some purpose-specific groups such as missions of the Christians. In Islam, theoretically, every Muslim shoulders this responsibility, and is required to contribute to spreading Islam in whatever way he or she can. The early Arab traders, who were Muslims by faith, were inspired by a missionary

²⁶ Muhammad Mohar Ali, *History of the Muslims of Bengal*, vol. I, *A: Muslim Rule in Bengal (600-1170/1203-1757)* (Riyadh: Department of Culture and Publications, Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd Islamic University, 1985), pp. 30, 37.

²⁷ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, pp. 320-21.

²⁸ For a survey, see Thomas W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (London: Constable, 1913 rpt., first published 1896), chap. IX, pp. 254-93, S. M. Imamuddin, "Early Preaching of Islam in the Subcontinent with Special reference to Sind", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXXIII, part IV (October 1985), pp. 273-87, and Moinul Haq, "The Spread of Islam in South Asia" in *Islam in South Asia*, ed. Waheed-uz-Zaman and M. Saleem Akhtar (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1993), pp. 52-83. For a contradictory view-point, see Bruce B. Lawrence, "Early Indo-Muslim Saints and Conversion" in *Islam in Asia*, ed. Yohanan Friedmann, vol. 1, *South Asia* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1984), pp. 109-45. For a critical review of various theories of conversion to Islam in India, see Richard M. Eaton, "Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam in India" in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1985), pp. 106-23.

²⁹ For a brief discussion, see M. B. Hooker, "Introduction: The Translation of Islam in South-East Asia", in *Islam in South-East Asia*, ed. M. B. Hooker (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), pp. 1-22.

zeal, and took up the responsibility of propagating their faith wherever they went. It was due to the efforts of these traders, Sufis and preachers that initially Islam spread in India. Muslim presence in various regions of India, which was initially minimal, would serve as a social base, though narrow, for Muslim rule. Conversion to Islam in the subsequent centuries was indirectly facilitated by the establishment of Muslim rule in India. This needs to be understood in the context of the rise of Turkish militarism in the ‘Abbāsīd Empire.

2.3 Rise of ‘Turkish Militarism’ under the ‘Abbāsīds, and Expansion towards India

The establishment of Delhi Sultanate in India in the first decade of the thirteenth century needs to be understood in a proper historical context, which necessitates a brief discussion on the political developments in the ‘Abbāsīd Empire leading to the rise of ‘Turkish militarism’.³⁰ Beside other consequences, it had far-reaching repercussions for India, as it gave fresh impetus to expansion towards it.

The Umayyad Dynasty was uprooted by the ‘Abbāsīd Revolution of 749, and replaced by the House of ‘Abbās, which ruled for about five centuries. For nearly a century, the ‘Abbāsīds ruled their Empire with extraordinary ability, but the eighth ‘Abbāsīd Caliph, al-Mu‘taṣīm Bi-Allāh (r. 833-42), is considered the last effective ruler of the dynasty. The post-Mu‘taṣīm period showed signs of decline and disintegration, which stretched over a period of four centuries. This era was also marked by the ascendancy of the Turkish military commanders. In fact, during Caliph Māmūn al-

³⁰ For a detailed study, see Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

Rashīd's reign (r. 813-33), Mutasim, the Governor of Syria and Egypt, initiated the practice of getting recruits for the army from the Eastern provinces of the Empire, who came to be known as the 'Turks'.³¹ Hailing from nomadic backgrounds, they were known for their military prowess, hardihood, valour, rowdiness and loyalty.

The Central and West Asian region was the home of the Turks, having both their sedentary as well as nomad population. The Umayyads conquered their lands quite early, but conversion to Sunnī Islam among Turks generally took place in the tenth century under the 'Abbāsids. It is said that in addition to the simplicity of the basic tenets of Islam that appealed to the Turks, it also opened opportunities of career for them, particularly service in state army, which befitted their natural aptitude. It also provided them chances of booty collection.³² Moreover, in Central Asian regions, Islam was symbolized by *jihād* (holy war). These detribalized Turks were imported to the Muslim territories as military slaves, and hence, came to be known as *mamlūk*, literally meaning the slaves. In the opinion of Patricia Crone:

The creation of the *mamluk* institution consisted in a simple fusion of the two components which had hitherto remained discrete, servile status and alien origin. Freedman reared in an Islamic environment and free mercenaries recruited abroad, for all that they became extremely common in the Muslim armies, were

³¹ All of them were not ethnically Turk, but being predominantly Turk, they came to be referred to as such. The word Turk was generally used more in political and/or linguistic sense than in an ethnic meaning. Many non-Turkish groups and clans had adopted Turkish language, and hence, they too were regarded as Turks. These troops hailed from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and were non-Arabic speaking. For further details, see Appendix I, "Juzjānī's Use of the Word 'Turk'" in Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 326.

³² 'Osmān Sayyid Aḥmad Ismā'il al-Bilī, *Prelude to the Generals: A Study of Some Aspects of the Reign of the Eighth Abbasid Caliph, Al-Mu'taṣim Bi-Allah (218-277 AH/833-842 AD)* [sic] (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2001), pp. 51-52.

so to speak approximations to the ideal type: the classical *mamluk* is characterized by *both* personal dependence and cultural dissociation.³³

These new recruits, according to al-Bīlī, served three important purposes of the Māmūn regime:³⁴ First, with the expansion of the territorial boundaries of the Empire, prosperity and affluence crept in among the Arabs, who cultivated luxurious and comfortable lifestyles. Increasing urbanization, which encouraged trade and commerce, and flourishing of crafts and commercial activities, further gave way to dwindling human resource for the civil bureaucracy and army, as less people were now inclined to join state services. This vacuum created in administrative circles of the Empire was adequately filled by these Turkish recruits. Secondly, the stability and security of Māmūn's regime was also threatened by internal uprisings and external threats, most notably from Byzantium. The practice of having new recruits instilled fresh blood in the military, which considerably strengthened the institution. Lastly, another pragmatic consideration before Māmūn was the elimination of old commanders, and their replacement by loyal generals in whom he could repose trust. These factors combined, necessitated the introduction of new elements in the army and administration.

These military slaves owed their training as well as their privileged place in the society to the care of their patrons, who usually acted as the foster parent of these slaves from adolescence.³⁵ Al-Mu'tašim commanded the personal loyalty of these troops, as a majority of them were his slaves as well. After assuming the Caliphate, he expanded this

³³ Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 74.

³⁴ Al-Bīlī, *Prelude to the Generals*, pp. 45-58.

³⁵ Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, p. 84.

'Caliphal Corps'. His favourite commanders received governorships and other administrative responsibilities. On social plane, owing to the discriminatory policies of al-Mu'taṣim, the cultural exclusiveness and regional, tribal and ethnic identities of various groups got encouraged. On political plane, it contributed to the emergence of regional dynasties in semi-autonomous kingdoms, such as Ṭāhirids in Khurasan and Aghlabids in North Africa.

Mutasim was succeeded by his son al-Wāthiq Bi-Allāh (r. 842-47), who followed the policies of his father. His successor, Caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847-61), was put on the throne by the generals. Soon the Turkish generals started conspiring with the members of the ruling family in proposing and deposing Caliphs. They also started concentrating powers of civil administration in their hands. Under Caliph al-Musta'īn (r. 862-66), a Turkish general Utamish became *wazīr* of the Empire. The military hegemony eventually culminated in the creation of the designation of *Amīr al-Umarā'* for a military general in 936, who exercised all military and civil authority in the name of the reigning Caliph al-Raḍī Bi-Allāh (r. 936-40). His name was inserted in the Friday sermons as well.³⁶ Henceforth, the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs were reduced to mere puppets in the hands of their generals-turned-*wazīrs*, who came to dominate the affairs of the state.

Owing to political fragmentation and instability at the centre, semi-independent regional dynasties sprang up in the peripheral provinces of the 'Abbāsīd Empire,³⁷ not to

³⁶ Al-Bīlī, *Prelude to the Generals*, p. 105.

³⁷ For instance, the Ṭāhirids emerged from Khurasan (eastern Persia) in the ninth century, whereas the Ṣuffārīds, who established themselves in Sīstān, and later conquered Khurasan from the Ṭāhirīds, ruled during the last quarter of the ninth century. The tenth century witnessed the rise of the Sāmānīds

mention the emergence of rival Caliphates such as the Fāṭimid Caliphate of Egypt and the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain, and absolutely independent kingdoms like those of Khārījīs, Qarāmaṭīs and Ismā‘ilīs in Makran, Baḥrayn and Multan respectively, which naturally threatened the ‘Abbāsīd political authority. The two regional dynasties of the Ghaznavids and Gaurids in the ‘Abbāsīd Empire, which have been briefly dealt with later on, played an important role in conquest and annexation of Indian territories. As for the regions of Sindh, Multan and Gujrat, semi-independent kingdoms also emerged there.

In Sindh and its neighbouring regions, the Umayyad governors had been regularly appointed. After the inception of the ‘Abbāsīd rule, these areas remained under the direct control of the ‘Abbāsīd governors for some time, but gradually, the hold of the ‘Abbāsīd Empire on its peripheral areas started weakening. Sindh, Multan and Gujrat already lay on the fringes of the ‘Abbāsīd Empire. In the wake of the weakening of the central authority of the ‘Abbāsīds in the first quarter of the ninth century, gradually these regions threw off the yoke of the ‘Abbāsīd allegiance one after another and became semi-independent. A brief discussion on these semi-independent kingdoms is hereunder.³⁸

from Transoxiana, who soon annexed Khurasan from the Ṣuffārīds. The Aghlabids ruled parts of North Africa, while Egypt went under the Ṭūlūnīds in the ninth century and later under the Ikhshīdīd rulers in the tenth century, with a brief interlude in between the two dynasties, when the Abbasid rule was temporarily restored there. Ḥamdānīds ruled over Mosul and Aleppo (Syria) in the tenth century, while in the eleventh century, Mesopotamia went under the control of the ‘Uqaylīds. Towards the close of the tenth century, the Qarākhānīds had established their dynasty in Transoxiana, including Bukhārā and Samarqand, as well as in Farghānah and Kāshgaria. The Ghaznavīds established themselves in Afghanistan and Khurasan during the tenth and eleventh centuries, but in the twelfth century, the political power in Afghanistan shifted to the Gaurīds. For a brief survey, see Spuler, *The Muslim World: A Historical Survey*, part I, *The Age of the Caliphs*, pp. 59-61, 68-70, 75-81.

³⁸ Qāḍī Aṭḥar Mubārakpurī, *Hindustān mēñ ‘Arabōñ kī Ḥukōmatēñ* (Delhi: Nadwat al-Muṣannifīn, 1967), see survey of Māhāniyyah Kingdom, its origin and its rulers, administrative system, relationship with the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate, its downfall, pp. 24-76; a brief history of Habbāriyyah Kingdom and its administration, pp. 77-123; a brief political history of Banū Sāmāh Kingdom, pp. 169-238; a discussion on Ma’dāniyyah Kingdom, pp. 255-70; and Arab rule in Ṭurān, pp. 279-88.

Gujrat: During the reign of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph Māmūn, a slave named Faḍl ibn Māhān established his semi-autonomous Māhāniyyah Kingdom in Gujrat with its capital at Sandān (modern Sanjān, a town situated in the north of Bombay). The rulers of the Kingdom owed allegiance to the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs, and for this reason the *khuṭbah* (sermon) of Friday Prayers was read in the name of the latter. However, after some years, Muslim rule came to a close, and the Hīndus took over the control of the government.

Sindh: The last ‘Abbāsīd governor of Sindh was Hārūn, a contemporary of ‘Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mutawakkil. After Hārūn’s death in 854, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, a member of an influential family, founded a semi-autonomous kingdom known as the Habbāriyyah Kingdom of Sindh. Its capital was Manṣūrah, which was formerly known as Brahmanabād. Its rulers had managed to get their recognition from al-Mutawakkil, whose name was read in the *khuṭbah* as well. However, the rule of the Habbāriyyah Dynasty ended after Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghaznah invaded and conquered the region.³⁹

Multan: Banū Sāmāh Kingdom was founded in Multan by Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ibn Munabbih Sāmī. It was also a semi-autonomous Kingdom, where the *khuṭbah* was read in the name of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs. The Sāmīs ruled Multan and its neighbouring territories for nearly one century, but later it was subdued by the Ismā‘īlīs. The Ismā‘īlī rulers of Multan owed their allegiance to the Fāṭimīd Caliph of Egypt. The last Ismā‘īlī

³⁹ For a detailed study of its history and administrative system, see Mumtaz Husain Pathan, *Arab Kingdom of al-Mansurah in Sindh* (Institute of Sindhology, University of Sind, 1974).

ruler named Abū 'l-Faṭḥ Dā'w'd was defeated by Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghaznah in 1010, after which the rule of the Ismā'īlīs came to an end.⁴⁰

Makran: Ma'dāniyyah Kingdom in the coastal areas of Makran was founded by an influential Khārijī leader named 'Īsā ibn Ma'dan. In fact, Khārijīs were expelled from Iraq, from where they went to Masqat and Oman and settled there. After their expulsion from these areas as well, they migrated to Makran. Being politically independent, the rulers of Ma'dāniyyah Kingdom, all of whom were Khārijīs by faith, did not owe allegiance to the 'Abbāsīd Caliph of Baghdad. They had adopted the Hindu title of *Mahrāj*. Ma'dāniyyah Kingdom ended when its last ruler was defeated by Muḥammad Ghaurī in 1178.

Ṭurān: Ṭurān in Balochistan presented a different picture than the rest of the above-mentioned regions. An influential Arab family had established its control in Qandābīl, but it was suppressed by the 'Abbāsīds. Again Qandābīl went out of the 'Abbāsīd control, but its control was regained. Then Mughīrah ibn Aḥmad founded a semi-independent kingdom, having nominal adherence to the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate. Nonetheless, it was not a dynastic rule of one family, and one after another, it was ruled by rulers from different families. Khuẓdār came under the influence of Khārijīs for a while as well. Later, Sultan Maḥmūd Ghaznavī crushed the power of a ruler of Khuẓdār, and finally, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ghaurī invaded the region and put an end to the kingdom.

⁴⁰ Daftary, *The Ismailis: Their History and Doctrines*, p. 180.

Many of the regional dynasties that emerged during the later ‘Abbāsīd times were founded by Turks. Ethnically, the Ṭūlūnids, Ikhshidids, Qarākhānids, Seljūqids and Ghaznavids all were of Turkish origin. Another related phenomenon that necessitates some description is the institution of Turkish military slavery, as indicated earlier. It was the military slaves of Turkish ethnicity, who had founded these semi-autonomous states. Lapidus terms the military slavery and ‘slave states’ as ‘peculiar’ institutions. Commenting on this phraseology and their functions, he adds that

...the translation of the word *ghulam* or *mamaluk* into English as “slaves” carries inappropriate connotations. The concept of *ghulam* or *mamaluk* designated a binding personal obedience but not necessarily a humble situation in society. In its Arabic and Muslim sense the slave soldier was the personal property of the master and could be bought and sold. He was a servile retainer, depending upon the master for security and support. The social position of the slave, however, did not reflect his personal servitude, but rather the status of his master. The slave of the Sultan could be a general or minister of state, and the slave of a general, an officer in the army or administration. Furthermore, military slaves were eventually manumitted and became freedmen, clients of their former masters, which gave them limited legal rights to property, marriage and personal security. In this institution the exclusive personal loyalty of the slave or client-soldier to his master was crucial.⁴¹

As mentioned above, the Ghaznavid Kingdom, which ruled Afghanistan and Khurasan in the tenth and eleventh centuries, was also founded by Turkish slaves Alptigīn and Subuktagīn.⁴² In the wake of the disintegration of Sāmānid Kingdom in the tenth century, the Ghaznavids established themselves in Afghanistan in 961, and later in Khurasan in 999. Actually, Alptigīn, a Turkish slave military commander, was appointed provincial governor by the Sāmānid King. He founded his own semi-independent

⁴¹ Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2d ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 122.

⁴² For a detailed study of the role of Alptigīn and Subuktagīn, see C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern India 994-1040* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1992), pp. 37-44.

Kingdom of Ghaznah in Afghanistan after the death of the King. Alptigin's slave and son-in-law, Subuktagin, became the ruler of Ghaznah in 977. The Ghaznavids were the first Turkish Muslim rulers to penetrate in India. Subuktagin added Lamghān (near modern Jalālabād) and Peshawar to the Ghaznavid Kingdom. His conflict with the Hindūshāhī Dynasty of Raja Jaipāl, ruling over some parts of Afghanistan and north-western India, also started in 986-87 A.D. Subuktagin, however, died in 997 and after a war of succession between his sons, Maḥmūd (r. 998-1030) finally ascended the throne of Ghaznah a year later. He got the confirmation of his rule from the Sāmānid King. The 'Abbāsīd Caliph of Baghdad al-Qādir Bi-Allāh also gave Maḥmūd a robe of honour, a flag and titles of *Yamīn al-Dawlah* (the right hand of the Empire) and *Amīn al-Millat* (the Custodian of the Faith) as a symbol of recognition of his political authority.⁴³ Maḥmūd declared himself as an independent ruler of Ghaznah and assumed the title of *Sulṭān*.⁴⁴ His kingdom included Balkh, Herāt, Tirmidh, Khurasan, Lamghān and Ghaznah.

During 1001-1026, he led about seventeen expeditions to India, and conquered a number of areas including Peshāwar, Kashmīr, Bhērā (in Salt Range), Nagarkot, Thaneswar, Qanauj, Kālinjar, Gwāliār, Sōmnāth (Gujrat) and Multan. Lahore was captured in 1030.⁴⁵ Sultan Maḥmūd, however, did not annex all the conquered areas to

⁴³ Abū Sa'id 'Abd al-Ḥaiyy ibn al-Dḥahhak ibn Maḥmūd Gardaizī, *Kitāb Zayn al-Akḥbār*, (comp. about 440 A.H.) ed. Muḥammad Nāzim (Berlin: Iranschāhr, 1928 A.D./1347 A.H.), p. 62.

⁴⁴ There are different opinions regarding Mahmud's assumption of the title of Sultan. See Muhammad Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna* (Lahore: Khalil and Co., 1973), p. 69, n.

⁴⁵ For a detailed account of the Ghaznavid conquests, see Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Jabbār al-'Utbi, *Tārīkh-i Yamīnī*, Eng. trans. H. M. Elliot, ed. J. Dowson, *The History of India as told by its Own Historians (The Muhammadan Period)*, vol. II (Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1976 rpt., first published 1869), pp. 24-51, and Gardaizī, *Kitāb Zayn al-Akḥbār*, pp. 63, 65-80, 86-88. 'Utbi's *Tārīkh-i Yamīnī* covers the history of Maḥmūd's reign down to the year 410 A.H./1020 A.D. See also the details of Maḥmūd's expeditions in India in S. M. Jaffar, *Medieval India under Muslim Kings*, vol.

the Kingdom of Ghaznah. He only annexed some parts of Sindh, Multan and the Punjab to it. Thus, some of the north-western Indian territories became part of the Ghaznavid Kingdom. In fact, he was chiefly interested in expansion towards Central Asia. Moreover, the Indian territories formed the second line of defense in the East. In other words, strategically, these areas served as a buffer zone between the heartland of Ghaznavid Kingdom and the north Indian Rajput States. He repeatedly invaded the Indian territories in order to keep the eastern frontiers of his kingdom safe.

The Ghaznavid conquests paved the way for the future conquest of north India by Afghans and Turks, as they exposed the weakness of the military system of the Rajputs. In the opinion of Wink, the economic impact of the Turkish conquest of India was “the revitalization of economy of settled agriculture through the dynamic impetus of forced monetization and the expansion of political dominion.”⁴⁶ This monetization was the result of the de-hoarding of Indian temple treasure, which went hand in hand with the Turkish conquest.

These initial conquests of Indian territories also opened a migration corridor to India. The ethnic diversity of India was further enhanced by these migrants who hailed from different backgrounds. Between the eighth and twelfth centuries, the Arabs, Central and Western Asians including Turks and Tājiks, Persians, Afghans and Mongols settled in north India. In addition to these migrants, these conquests provided opportunity to

II, *The Rise and Fall of the Ghaznavids* (Peshawar: S. Muhammad Sadiq Khan, 1940), chap. 3, pp. 49-83, and Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, pp. 86-122.

⁴⁶ Andre` Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, vol. II, *The Slave Kings and the Islamic Conquests 11th–13th Centuries* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 4.

scholars and travelers to visit India, which led to mutual exchange of ideas between the Hindus and the Muslims. Most renowned among them was Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (b. 973- d. 1038), the author of *Kitāb al-Hind* (The Book on India). He met Hindu scholars and *paṇḍits* (priests), and collected information for his work, which deals with the geography of India, Hinduism, and the traditions and customs of the eleventh century Indian society. It is considered to be the first book on the cultural history of the Hindus written by a Muslim. In the opinion of A. H. Dani, his “scholarship was suffused with sympathy and his attitude was understandability rather than disparaging the unfamiliar habits and customs.... Alberuni’s purpose was not to justify or condemn. He was aiming at introducing the Hindu society and the Hindu science to the Muslim world.”⁴⁷

Though Muslim conquests and establishment of political rule paved the way for propagation of Islam, it has been observed that the missionary efforts of the preachers and Sufis in many regions began prior to these conquests and annexations. The first Muslim preacher who is said to have migrated to Lahore for propagation of Islam before Maḥmūd’s invasions was Shaykh Ismā‘il al-Bukhārī al-Lāhaurī (d. 1056). He also propagated the study of *hadīth* among the Muslims in the city.⁴⁸ Similarly, Saiyyid ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, popularly known as *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh*, migrated from Ghaznah and settled in Lahore in the eleventh century. He authored the first treatise on Sufism written in Persian language—*Kashf al-Maḥjūb* (The Revelation of the Hidden).⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ahmad Hasan Dani, *Alberuni’s Indica*, Eng. trans. abridged and annotated (Islamabad: University of Islamabad Press, 1973), p. 1.

⁴⁸ Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden-Köln: E. J. Brill, 1980), p. 8.

⁴⁹ For a brief biographical sketch, see Dārā Shikōh, *Safinat al-Awliyā’*, Urdu trans. Muḥammad ‘Alī Luṭfī (Karachi: Nafis Academy, 1959), pp. 209-10. For his biography, teachings and works, see Shaikh Abdur Rashid, *The Life and Teachings of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh* (Lahore: Central Urdu

In addition to them, many other Sufis also migrated and settled in various parts of India for propagation of faith. In the wake of the Ghaznavid conquests, more 'ulamā', preachers and Sufis started pouring into Punjab, Multan and its neighbouring regions, which had come under the sway of the Ghaznavids. In this way, the Turkish conquests indirectly facilitated the spread of Islam in the Indian sub-continent.

The Ghaznavids could retain political control over Khurasan till 1040, and over Afghanistan till 1186, when the political power shifted to the local mountain chieftains of Ghaur in Afghanistan, referred to Ghaurids after their local identity. Ghaur, situated in the north of Kabul, was once a tributary province of Ghaznavid Kingdom. After the death of Ghaznavid King Sultan Maḥmūd, the chiefs of Ghaur became independent, and established their own Kingdom. The ruling house came to be known as Shansabāniyyah. After some time, there started a struggle for power between the rulers of Ghaznah and Ghaur, in which the latter emerged victorious. Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn, the Shansabānī King of Ghaur, captured Ghaznah in 1173 and entrusted it to his brother Prince Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad, who was also his deputy.

The Ghaurids are credited with undertaking the systematic conquest of India in the twelfth century. In those days, Lahore, Peshawar and their neighbouring territories

Development Board, 1967), Misbah-ul-Haque Siddiqui, ed., *The Life and Teachings of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh* (Lahore: Shahzad Publishers, 1977), and K. A. Nizami, "Shaikh 'Ali Hujwīrī Data Ganj Bakhsh—Morning Star of a Spiritual Revolution in South Asia," in *Historical Role of Three Auliya' of South Asia*, ed. Yusuf Abbas Hashmi (Karachi: Dr. I. H. Qureshi Chair, University of Karachi, 1987), see Lecture no. 1, pp. 1-34, and Ḥakīm Saiyyid Amin al-Dīn Aḥmad Dehlavī, *Tadhkira-'i 'Ali Hujwīrī* (Lahore: 'Ilm-o 'Irfān Publishers, n.d.)

were ruled by the Ghaznavids, and Multan and Uch were under the control of Ismā'īlī rulers. A local dynasty had established itself in Sindh, whereas the coastal areas of Makran were being ruled by the Khārijīs. As for the north India, it was under the authority of different Rajput states. Between the years 1175 and 1192, the territories of Uch, Multan, Gujrat, Peshawar, Sindh and Lahore were occupied by Shihāb al-Dīn Ghaurī. He defeated the Rajput confederacy led by the Rajput ruler of Delhi and Ajmer, Priṭhvīrāj Chauhān (Rā'ē Pithūrā), in a decisive battle in the field of Tarā'in in 1192. This victory laid the foundation of the Muslim rule in the Indian sub-continent. His Turkish slave general Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg, who originally belonged to Turkestan, conquered Delhi in 1193-4 and Qanauj in 1194, and was made in-charge of the Indian territories. Another general Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Khaljī conquered Bengal and Bihar in 1195-6, and was made in-charge of these regions.⁵⁰ Thus, these Turkish slave generals of Shihāb al-Dīn Ghaurī are credited with the expansion of Muslim rule in the Indian Subcontinent, since they were given free hand in running the affairs of their respective territories, and extending them by further conquest and annexation.

Upon the death of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn in 1203, his younger brother Shihāb al-Dīn Ghaurī (who assumed the title of Mu'izz al-Dīn) became the King of Ghaznah, Ghaur and Delhi. Three years later in 1206, Sultan Shihāb al-Dīn Ghaurī was murdered, and was succeeded by his nephew Sultan Maḥmūd. It was he who played an instrumental

⁵⁰ For a detailed account of Ghaurid campaigns, see Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Nizāmī, *Tāj al-Ma'āthir*, Eng. trans. and ed., Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India as told by its Own Historians*, vol. II, pp. 212-35. *Tāj al-Ma'āthir* covers the history of the Ghaurids from 602 A.H./1205 A.D. to 626 A.H./1228 A.D. See also Mohammad Habib, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period: Collected Works of Professor Mohammad Habib*, ed. K. A. Nizami, vol. 2 (New Delhi: People's Publishing House for Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, 1981), pp. 110-22.

role in the foundation of Muslim rule in India, practically independent of any higher political authority.

2.4 Foundation of the Delhi Sultanate, and Consolidation of its Political Authority

In 1206, Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the successor of Shihāb al-Dīn Ghaurī, manumitted the Turkish slave general Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg, and also bestowed the title of 'Sultan' on him. Aybeg was also appointed as the ruler of Indian territories with Lahore as their capital in the same year.⁵¹ His authority as the independent ruler of the Indian territories was acknowledged by the provincial governors in India such as Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Khaljī, the Governor of Bengal and Bihar, and Nāṣir al-Dīn Qabāchāh, the Governor of Sindh and Multan, who was also a Turkish slave of Sultan Shihāb al-Dīn Ghaurī, but hostilities were initiated with the ruler of Ghaznah Tāj al-Dīn Yaldūz.⁵² Nevertheless, the life of Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg (r. 1206-10), the founder of the Delhi Sultanate, was cut short by his accidental death in its capital Lahore in 1210. His successor, Sultan Ārām Shāh (r. 1210-11) proved weak and incapable. So by the end of the first decade of the thirteenth century, the process of state formation by the Turkish conquerors in northern India was not yet completed, and the Sultanate of Delhi was still in its nascent phase. The political authority was yet to be firmly established and the state structures and administrative set up of the Sultanate were still to be set up.

Sultan Shams al-Dīn Iletmish (r. 1211-36), who replaced Ārām Shāh in 1211, is considered to be the co-founder of the Sultanate with Aybeg, as he is credited with its

⁵¹ Minhāj al-Sirāj Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, (comp. in 1260), ed. Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Chughtā'i (Lahore: Kitābkhāna Naurus, 1952 rpt.) p. 54.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 526.

consolidation. He moved the capital from Lahore to Delhi. When he ascended the throne of Delhi, the writ of the state was yet to be uniformly established, since the political authority was contested by many regional leaders, most notably in Ghaznah, Multan and Bengal. He had faced the external and internal threats to the political authority of the Sultanate. Not only did he avert an imminent Mongol⁵³ invasion in India in 1221,⁵⁴ he also suppressed the rival claimants to political power, who had refused to accept his authority, such as Nāṣir al-Dīn Qabāchāh in Sindh and Multan, Tāj al-Dīn Yaldūz in Ghaznah, and ‘Alī Mardān Khaljī in Bengal.⁵⁵ Sultan Iltmish gave his trusted and most loyal slaves (*bandagān-i khāṣṣ*) governorships in these newly conquered territories which were far from the capital.⁵⁶ In this way, by deploying the resources of personal trust and loyalty, he consolidated his political authority in these regions. He also recovered vast territories lost under his predecessor, and also extended the authority of the Sultanate to regions including Ranthambhōr, Mandōr, Jālōr, Nagda, Mālwah, Ujjain, Gwāliār, Katēhar, Bahrāich, Awadh and Doāb. In addition, a great deal of attention was paid to institution-building in order to ensure the sustainability of Muslim rule in India. Sultan Iltmish consolidated the administrative structures in the Sultanate. He particularly paid attention to the administration of justice. He initiated works of public welfare as well,

⁵³ For a detailed study of the Mongol Empire, their leaders and military campaigns, dynasties, customs and characteristics, see Bertold Spuler, *History of the Mongols based on Eastern and Western Accounts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, Eng. trans. from the German Helga and Stuart Drummond, A volume in The Islamic World Series, ed. G. E. von Grunebaum (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).

⁵⁴ Agha Hussain Hamadani, *The Frontier Policy of the Delhi Sultans* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1986), pp. 47-48.

⁵⁵ For details see A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India (A History of the Establishment and Progress of the Turkish Sultanate of Delhi: 1206-1290 A.D.)*, 2d rev. ed., (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1961), pp. 92-100.

⁵⁶ Uch was given to a Shamsī slave, Malik Tāj al-Dīn Sanjar, Multan to Malik Kabīr Khān, and Lakhnautī to Malik Sayf al-Dīn Aybeg after the dismissal of Malik ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Jānī. Sunil Kumar, “When Slaves were Nobles: The Shamsī *Bandagān* in the Early Delhi Sultanate”, *Studies in History*, vol. 10. no. 1, New Delhi (1994), pp. 45-46.

such as construction of a huge water storage tank in Delhi to overcome the problem of water shortage in the capital. He issued a new silver coinage, which signified assertion of his political authority.

Nevertheless, Peter Hardy suggests that it was by the end of the reign of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban (r. 1266-86) that the Delhi Sultanate was generally obeyed, but Hardy also infers from various events that it was not till the fourteenth century that there was a voluntary recognition by non-Muslims of the authority of Muslim ruling institutions.⁵⁷ Thus, the Muslim rule in northern India was gradually consolidated, and its political authority recognized.

Section II Political Authority in the Sultanate of Delhi

Before we discuss the characteristics of political authority in the Sultanate of Delhi, it seems useful to present a brief overview of the political authority in pre- and early Islamic era, particularly focusing on the relationship between religious and political authorities as well, followed by a brief discussion on the political authority under the 'Abbāsids, from where the Sultanate of Delhi drew its own authority, at least in principle, and whose appendage and extension it was in practical terms.

⁵⁷ Peter Hardy, "Growth of Authority Over a Conquered Political Elite: Early Delhi Sultanate as a Possible Case Study", in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, ed. J. F. Richards (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 218-19.

2.5 Historical Antecedents of the Political Authority of Delhi Sultanate

Before the dawn of Islam, the Near East in late antiquity presented a mosaic of cultural patterns, political identities and religious traditions informed by Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Paganism. Most of these religions of late antiquity were either closely associated with states and empires, such as Christianity and Zoroastrianism being identified with the Roman and the Sasanian Empires respectively, or there was an amalgamation of political and religious authorities such as in Judaism.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, Manichaeism failed to establish a symbiotic relationship with any dominant state of that time,⁵⁹ as a result of which it had almost disappeared from Persia.

As for Islam, from its very inception, the religious and political authorities remained closely tied to each other. During the lifetime of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), the two authorities rested in him, as he not only discharged his prophetic duties, he also acted as the head of the State of Medinah. Under Pious Caliphate, the religious and political authorities were not clearly demarcated, and hence, the religious and political authorities were not considered to belong to two separate domains. Rather to be more accurate, there was no dichotomy between the spiritual and temporal realms. The Pious Caliphs acted as heads of the state as well as the *imāms* (leaders) of prayers, which represented religious authority. However, the political authority of the last two Caliphs—‘Uthmān and ‘Alī—was contested on political and religious grounds by various groups, a phenomenon which marked the first signs of internal schism within the body politic of Islam. In addition to the differences of theological nature, which considerably shaped the

⁵⁸ For a useful survey of the religions of late antiquity, see Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, pp. 10-38.

⁵⁹ Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 75.

political developments in the early Islamic era, the tribal identities and ties of kinship among the Arabs also played a crucial role in politics.

After the Pious Caliphs, the Umayyads altered the very nature of the institution of Caliphate by transforming it into a monarchical and imperial office. Public exchequer or the *bayt al-māl* was converted into private property, contrary to the practice of the Pious Caliphs. The self-styled Umayyad Caliphs assumed the grandiose title of *khalīfat Allāh* (deputy of God).⁶⁰ They made use of theological arguments to justify their rule. In the opinion of Watt, it was the theological standpoint of the Umayyads which compelled their opponents to use various theological positions to discredit them.⁶¹ The assertions and functions of Umayyad rulers suggest that the political and religious authorities were inseparably intertwined. Confronted with a crisis of legitimacy from its very inception, the political authority of the Umayyads was contested by various dissident sectarian groups including the Khārijites, Kaysāniyyah and Shī'ites.⁶² It is important to mention that in Shī'ite Islam, theoretically, the political and religious authorities are vested in the person of *Imam*,⁶³ a notion which later on developed into a full-fledged doctrine of

⁶⁰ For a useful survey, see Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 4-23.

⁶¹ Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 85. For a brief discussion on the Umayyad claim to divine authority, see pp. 82-85.

⁶² For a detailed account see *Ibid.*, chaps. 1 and 2, pp. 9-62; see some discussion on various sects in early Islam in Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Eng. trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), chap. V, pp. 167-229, and G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661-750* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), pp. 11-18.

⁶³ Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *The Just Ruler (al-sultān al-'ādil) in Shi'ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 89; see details in chap. 4, pp. 89-118.

Imamate.⁶⁴ Though in Sunnī Islam, the political and the religious authorities were vested in the person of caliph during the Pious Caliphate, the two authorities were later bifurcated during the Umayyad era. Later, in Sunnī political theory, the political authority came to be recognized as independent from the religious authority.

The Umayyad State was founded explicitly on the claims of one family to rule. The principle of hereditary succession was practiced. For administrative, political and military purposes, the Umayyad regime relied heavily on the Arabs, and more notably on Arabian aristocracy. The recruitment policies displayed exclusiveness that betrayed the narrow social base of the regime. The dissatisfaction of the non-Arabs with the repressive political and religious policies, and socio-economic injustices, found expression in rebellions and revolts, as pointed out in the preceding chapter. The racial, ethnic and tribal identities played a dominant role in politics in the Umayyad era. The peculiar political and social conditions of the late Umayyad era culminated in the 'Abbāsīd Revolution in Khurasan in 749.⁶⁵

In the wake of the 'Abbāsīd seizure of power, with the shifting of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad, the centre of gravity also shifted eastward. The 'Arabness' of the rule preserved by the Umayyads was lessened, as the 'Abbāsīd regime was more inclusive. It was evident from the inclusion of non-Arabs, especially the Turks and

⁶⁴ For a detailed discussion on the concept of Imamate, see Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 147-60.

⁶⁵ For a detailed study of the social and political background to the Abbasid Revolution, see M. A. Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

Persians, in military and civil administrative bureaucracy. It eventually led to Turkish military hegemony in the Empire, as has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

The 'Abbāsīd rulers adopted titles and epithets such as deputies of God, trustees of God, imams of guidance, imams of justice, and rightly guided,⁶⁶ which imply strong claims to religious authority. Like the Umayyads, it was an attempt to draw legitimacy for their rule by using religious symbols. They made attempts to extend their authority to the realm of religion. A majority of the 'Abbāsīd rulers had explicit Sunnī orientation, but there were a few exceptions as well. One such exception was Caliph al-Māmūn, who under the influence of Mu'tazilism, initiated the practice of *miḥnah*, requiring the people at large, as well as the religious notables, to publicly profess the doctrine of the 'createdness' of the Quran.⁶⁷ After al-Māmūn, Caliphs al-Wāthiq and al-Mu'taṣim continued the practice, but Caliph al-Mutawakkil had to abandon it in the face of continuing opposition. In the opinion of Berkey, "the failure of the *miḥnah* marked the definitive triumph of the '*ulamā*', rather than the caliph, as the principal locus of religious authority in Islam."⁶⁸ But it was only gradually that the '*ulamā*' had come to be recognized as the custodians of religious authority in Sunnī Islam.

An important feature of the 'Abbāsīd era was the 'creative tension' between religious and political authorities.⁶⁹ The '*ulamā*', representing the religious authority, and the military rulers of semi-autonomous kingdoms, relied on each other, the former

⁶⁶ Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, pp. 80-81.

⁶⁷ See details in Richard Bulliet, *Islam: The View from the Edge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 118-19.

⁶⁸ Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, p. 127.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

requiring financial support from the latter, whereas the latter needed legitimacy for their regimes. Eventually, it helped increase the social power of the ‘*ulamā*’, although the state tried to control and contain them as well. Owing to the decline of the practice of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and the prevalence of the practice of *taqlīd* (strict conformism to any of the schools of Sunnī jurisprudence), the authority of the ‘*ulamā*’ was further enhanced.

During the ninth century and later, in the wake of political fragmentation of the ‘Abbāsīd Empire and the weakening of its central authority, there emerged strong but localized regional powers. These kingdoms were semi-autonomous, with nominal allegiance to the Caliph of Baghdad. Two regional Kingdoms of Buwayhids and Seljūqids deserve special mention, owing to their central position, and because they took control of Baghdad, the seat of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate.

The Buwayhids, who took control of Baghdad in 945, established their power in Iraq, Mesopotamia and western Iran, and ruled from 945-1055 AD. It was one of the most important and powerful dynasties that ruled the Muslim heartlands. Gradually, the Buwayhid rulers became the virtual sovereign, while the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs were reduced to the position of a titular head of the state. Having Shī’ite religious orientation, the Buwayhids were thoroughly ‘Persianized’ in their political and socio-cultural outlook. Their political system reflected an effort to make the ideals of Muslim political system compatible with the Sasanian monarchical traditions. The Buwayhids tried to create a public aura of legitimacy. The ancient Persian titulature such as *Shahanshāh* (King of

kings or Emperor) was revived by them. High-sounding titles were adopted by them, and ceremonies displaying royal insignias such as the crown and the throne were prevalent among them. They also cultivated a mystique of kingship, suggesting divine selection revealed in dreams, miracles and prophecies. They also fabricated genealogies linking their lineage to ancient Persian kings. They extended patronage to public works, arts and literature as symbols of royal authority.⁷⁰

The Buwayhids were succeeded by the Seljūqids, who defeated the former, and seized control of Baghdad and the Caliphate in 1055. They also seized Iraq, Mesopotamia, Iran, Khurasan and Anatolia, and thus, most of the former ‘Abbāsīd Empire came under their sway. Though the title of ‘Sultan’ had been assumed by the earlier rulers, the Seljūqids were the first for whom it became a regular title for a ruler.⁷¹ The title symbolized the assertion of supreme and exclusive power and temporal authority. Being ethnically Turks, and having staunch Sunnī orientation, they downplayed ancient Persian political traditions unlike the Buwayhids. They did not follow Sasanian political traditions. Their state was a sort of ‘family confederation’ or ‘appanage state’, in which the head of the ruling family assigned portions of the dominion as autonomous appanages to other members of his house.⁷² In a likewise manner, Sultan Muḥammad Ghaurī had also assigned portions of his kingdom to his various military commanders or administrators as autonomous appanages. The Seljūqid era of dominance roughly stretches from mid eleventh century to the end of the twelfth

⁷⁰ Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, p. 121.

⁷¹ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. IX, art. Sultān, sec. 1, *In Early Islamic Usage and in the Central Lands of Islam* by J. H. Kramers-[C. E. Bosworth], p. 850.

⁷² Wink, *Al-Hind*, vol. II, p. 10.

century. It is important to note that the political traditions, state structures and political culture of the Sultanate of Delhi bore an undeniable mark of Turco-Persian elements, which was a legacy of the Buwayhids and Seljūqids.

2.6 Characteristics of Political Authority in the Delhi Sultanate

After having briefly reviewed the historical antecedents of political authority in the Delhi Sultanate, it seems pertinent to turn to the characteristics of political authority:

2.6.1 Sultan—The Chief Locus of Political Authority in the Sultanate

The word *sulṭān* is of Arabic origin, literally meaning power and authority. As an epithet, it refers to a person who wields political authority, or holds political power. Since the Turkish slave general Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg was bestowed the title of Sultan and appointed as the independent ruler of Indian territories in 1206 by Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd⁷³ (the successor of Shihāb al-Dīn Ghaurī), his Kingdom came to be referred as a Sultanate. The dynasty he founded has variously been named as the Early Turkish, Mamlūk or Slave Dynasty. It was succeeded by four other dynasties, namely the Khaljis, Tughluqs, Saiyyids and Lodhīs. The rulers of these dynasties too assumed the titles of ‘Sultan’. For this reason, their kingdoms are also referred to as Sultanates.⁷⁴

As for the first usage of the title of Sultan, there are conflicting opinions about it.

It has been suggested that it was bestowed upon Ja‘far ibn Yaḥyā, a favourite of ‘Abbāsīd

⁷³ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāsirī*, p. 54.

⁷⁴ However, it was with the advent of the Mughals that the practice of assuming the title of Sultan was discontinued, since they styled themselves as *Shahanshāh* (Emperor). Moreover, unlike the Sultans, the Mughal Emperors did not owe allegiance to any higher political authority such as to their contemporary Ottoman Caliphs.

Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809) for the first time.⁷⁵ According to Juzjānī, Maḥmūd of Ghaznah was the first ruler who was granted the title of Sultan by the Caliph of Baghdad.⁷⁶ The Buwayhid ruler of Fārs named Abū Shujā' (r. 1012-24) assumed the title of *Sultān al-Dawlah*, while the last Buwayhid ruler at Baghdad, Al-Malik al-Raḥīm, also adopted the same title.⁷⁷ Among the Seljūqids, Ṭughril Beg received the title of *al-Sultān Rukn al-Dawlah* from the 'Abbāsīd Caliph in 1051.⁷⁸ It was with the Seljūqids that the title of Sultan became a regular sovereign title. In this way, the practice of assuming this title was institutionalized by the Seljūqid rulers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. But it is important to bear in mind that the title of Sultan gradually gained in dignity, and it became the highest title that a Muslim king could obtain. It was assumed by great and powerful monarchs, while petty princes contended themselves with the titles such as *Amīr*, *Malik* and *Khān*.⁷⁹

In the Sultanate of Delhi, the Sultan gradually emerged as the chief locus of political authority and the pivot of the whole administrative machinery. Being the fountainhead of administration, all political and administrative power flowed from him down to the lowest levels of administrative hierarchy. In fact, the institution of Sultan was the centre of gravity in the entire political system of the Sultanate. Regarding the authority of the Muslim kings in India, Peter Hardy argues that

...while royal authority over Muslims was claimed in general by means of a religious symbolism, the claims made for each king were in a patrimonial idiom,

⁷⁵ Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 2003 rpt., first published London, 1884), p. 202. For details, see Appendix D, "The Title Sultan", pp. 202-3.

⁷⁶ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, p. 8.

⁷⁷ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. IX, art. Sultān, sec. 1, *In Early Islamic Usage and in the Central Lands of Islam* by J. H. Kramers-[C. E. Bosworth], p. 850.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 202.

and the responses to those claims were in terms of a personal loyalty. Any growth of authority over non-Muslims is attributed to homologies between mainstream Muslim and Hindu traditions of rulership and social order—to homologous notions of terrestrial life as a rite, of man's moral personality, of social 'organicism' and hierarchy.⁸⁰

Theoretically, the Sultan was responsible for the protection of religion (*dīnpanāhi*), settling disputes among the subjects, waging *jihād* or holy war against the enemies of Islam, defending the territories of the Sultanate against foreign aggression, maintenance of law and order, and collection of taxes to spend money on security and welfare of people.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the state conduct and stability of the Sultanate depended on the personal strength of the Sultan. If the Sultan was strong having personal ability to rule, he successfully ruled the kingdom, but weak, incapable and unworthy Sultans could not rule for longer periods.⁸² There were no specific rules that governed the issue of succession in the Sultanate. Very often the sons of the Sultans were designated as heirs-apparent, but in some cases a son-in-law, father-in-law and a cousin of the Sultan also succeeded.⁸³ The presence of the Sultan on the throne of Delhi was considered necessary to keep the social and political order of the kingdom intact, as the brief interlude between the death or dismissal of a Sultan and accession of the next Sultan was perceived to be a time of crisis and confusion, since the law and order could break down in the Sultanate at that time. For instance, after the sudden death of Aybeg in Lahore in

⁸⁰ Peter Hardy, "The Authority of Muslim Kings in Mediaeval South Asia", *Purusartha*, Paris, vol. 9 (1986), p. 55.

⁸¹ For a brief discussion, see I. H. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, 2d rev. ed., (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1944 rpt., first published 1942), pp. 48-49.

⁸² For instance, Sultan Iltmish ruled for thirty years, Sultan Balban for twenty years, Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī for twenty years, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Firūz Tughluq ruled for twenty six and thirty seven years respectively, but incapable Sultans such as Mu'izz al-Dīn Bahrām could rule for less than two years, whereas Ārām Shāh and Rukn al-Dīn Firūz ruled for a few months.

⁸³ For instance, Sultan Iltmish, who succeeded Aybeg, was his son-in-law, Sultan Balban succeeded his son-in-law, while Sultan Firūz Tughluq succeeded his cousin Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.

1210, his advisers and high state officials immediately raised Ārām Shāh to the throne in order to restrain tumult.⁸⁴ His accession was largely driven by the exigencies of the moment. Similarly, the sudden death of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq (r. 1325-51) near Thattah (Sindh) in 1351, far from the capital created confusion and chaos in the camp, as for three days, the entire army and the camp were without any leader.⁸⁵ Therefore, the cousin of the late Sultan, Firūz Shāh Tughluq, was immediately and unanimously made the next Sultan in order to contain the tumult.⁸⁶

2.6.2 ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate—A Source of Political Legitimacy for the Sultanate

The institution of Sultanate was a product of political expediency.⁸⁷ Born out of sheer political pragmatism, the institution was legitimized by bringing it within the framework

⁸⁴ Juzjānī, Sirhindī and ‘Iṣāmī write that Ārām Shāh was the son of the late Sultan Aybeg. Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, p. 55, Yaḥyā bin Aḥmad bin ‘Abd Allāh Sirhindī, *Tārikh-i Mubārakshāhī*, ed. Shams al-‘Ulamā’ M. Hidayat Hosain (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1931), p. 16, and Mawlānā ‘Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭin (Shahnāmah-i Hind)*, (comp. in 1348), ed. Agha Mahdi Husain (Allahabad: Hindustani Academy, 1938), p. 101. Nevertheless, in the English translation of the work contradicts it, as the *kunyah* of Ārām Shāh has been written as Ārām Shāh ibn Mubārak, which indicates that his father’s name was Mubārak. Mawlānā ‘Iṣāmī, *Futūḥu’s Salāṭin*, ed. with commentary and Eng. trans. Agha Mahdi Husain (Aligarh: The Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, Muslim University, 1976), p. 213.

Juzjānī’s statement that Aybeg had three daughters (p. 55) has taken by historians to assume that he had no son. Therefore, a modern historian contends that there was no relationship between them, and he was selected as he was available on the spot. In the opinion of Kalikinkar Datta, there were no fixed rules of succession in the Turkish Sultanate, and the decision was determined largely by the exigencies of the moment and the influence of the *umarā’*. R. C. Majumdar, H. C. Raychaudhuri and Kalikinkar Datta, *An Advanced History of India* (London: Macmillan, 1950), p. 282. Therefore, it is most probable that Ārām Shāh was the son of Aybeg.

⁸⁵ Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq died on 21st Muḥarram, and Sultan Firūz assumed the powers of Sultan on 24th Muḥarram. Diyā’ al-Dīn Baranī, *Tārikh-i Firūzshāhī*, (comp. in 1359), ed. Saiyyid Aḥmad Khān (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1862), pp. 525, 536.

⁸⁶ Jamini Mohan Banerjee, *History of Firuz Shah Tughluq* (Lahore: Progressive books, 1976 rpt., first published 1967), p. 12.

⁸⁷ However, it has been argued that the subordination of the institution of Sultanate to the Caliph was real in many cases, and not merely a legal fiction. The Seljūqid Sultans had been delegated authority by the Caliphate, and the Sultanate had willingly made itself an instrument of the Caliphate. Moreover, the moral and legal superiority of the Caliphate was sincerely and faithfully recognized by the Sultans. S. Rizwan Ali Rizvi, “The Sultanate was Real and Not a Legal Fiction”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXVIII, part I (January 1980), pp. 37-39.

of Sunnī political doctrines. The Sunnī jurists had argued that the forceful imposition of rule by a military chief over a part of the Muslim world was to be accepted as legitimate provided the Caliph invested him with authority in return for his undertaking to rule according to the *Sharī'ah* and defend Muslim territory.⁸⁸ The rulers of independent kingdoms, though completely independent for all practical purposes, needed to legitimize their rule, and for this reason, they sought confirmation of their authority from the reigning Caliphs.

Theoretically, the Sultans of Delhi were subservient to the authority of 'Abbāsīd Caliphs of Baghdad, but practically, the Caliph could not interfere in the affairs of the Sultanate. The Sultans of Delhi had a free hand in running the affairs of their kingdom. In order to express their allegiance to the Caliph of Baghdad, the *khuṭbah* or the Friday sermon was read and coins were struck in the names of the latter. This symbolic allegiance of the Sultans of Delhi to the Caliphs had a tremendous bearing on the political legitimacy of the Sultan's rule in the Muslim society in India. With only very few exceptions, almost all Sultans of Delhi owed allegiance to the Caliphs. Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh of Khaljī Dynasty claimed to be a Caliph.⁸⁹ Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq gave up all reference to the Caliph in the *khuṭbah* and coins, when he came to know that the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate had been terminated by the Mongol leader Halāgū Khān. Therefore, the Sultan requested the 'Abbāsīd Caliph of Egypt, al-Mustakfī Bi-

⁸⁸ Hardy, "Part IV: Islam in Medieval India", in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, ed. Embree, p. 409.

⁸⁹ Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 32.

Allāh, to confirm him as Sultan. Subsequently, the Sultan received the investiture in 1343.⁹⁰

In return for their allegiance, three Sultans of Delhi, namely Sultan Iltutmish, Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, and Sultan Muḥammad bin Tughluq received legal investitures (*manshūr*), titles and robes of honour (*khill'at*) from the 'Abbāsid Caliphs, which were considered to be the symbols of the recognition of the rule of the former by the latter. In short, the Caliph was a source of legitimacy for any government in Delhi. Iltutmish was the first Sultan of Delhi to receive an investiture and a robe of honour from his contemporary 'Abbāsid Caliph Abū Ja'far Maṣṣūr al-Mustaṣir Bi-Allāh (r. 1226-42) in 1229. Iltutmish also received the title of *Nāṣir-i Amīr al-Mō'minīn* (Helper of the Commander of the Faithful).⁹¹ The investiture and the title gave a legal basis to his authority.

2.6.3 *Umarā'*—The Main Political Actors of the Sultanate

The *umarā'* (sing. *amīr*, generally mistakenly translated as a noble)⁹² were the main political actors of the Sultanate.⁹³ They included the advisers of the Sultans at the court, provincial governors, and military commanders. They enjoyed prestigious titles such as

⁹⁰ Agha Mahdi Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq* (London: Luzac and Co., 1938), p. 169.

⁹¹ K. A. Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1997), p. 22.

⁹² Sunil Kumar has contested the usage of the term 'noble' in context of medieval India. He contends that the term is "borrowed with such a limited set of implications from European history, and since it sits so uneasily in the social milieu of pre-Mughal India, it should not just be used with far greater care, but that the term itself obscures rather than reveals the unique elements of medieval social and political life." He further adds: "In a political culture where a large number of the elite were slaves, or freemen who sought to appear as slaves, the term 'noble' is either a misnomer or in need of a dramatic redefinition." Kumar, "When Slaves were Nobles", pp. 37, 52.

⁹³ For a detailed study, see S. B. P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, 1206-1398 A.D.* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967).

Amir and *Malik*. The arbitrary powers of the Sultans were checked by them, but the weak and incapable Sultans could also become puppets in the hands of the *umarā'*. Under the early Turkish Sultans of Delhi, the *Umarā'-i Chihalgānī* (literally meaning the forty *amīrs*), who were the slaves of Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish, remained quite influential in decision-making.⁹⁴ The accession of Rukn al-Dīn Firūz to the throne of Delhi in 1236, is one such example in point.⁹⁵ During the reigns of Mu'izz al-Dīn Bahrām Shāh (r. 1240-42) and 'Alā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd (r. 1242-46), these *umarā'* had reduced both of these Sultans of Delhi to mere puppets, and enjoyed tremendous influence in state affairs.⁹⁶

The *umarā'* at the court cannot be treated as a homogeneous group, as they were divided into rival factions and groups, each one trying to establish its supremacy in the state. For instance, after the death of Iltutmish, there arose a conflict between the Turk and the Tājik *amīrs*, as the latter generally refused to accept the authority of Iltutmish's son, Sultan Rukn al-Dīn Firūz. The dissident faction was soon joined by Iltutmish's *wazīr* Nizām al-Mulk Junaydī, who was ethnically a Tājik. The conflict took an ethnic form,

⁹⁴ Though Juzjānī does not make any mention of *Chihalgānī*, he gives a detailed account of twenty-five *Mulūk-i Shamsīyya*. Idem, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, pp. 134-78. According to Hambly, these twenty-five *Maliks* can be identified with the most prominent of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī's *Umarā'-i Chihalgānī*. Gavin Hambly, "Who were the *Chihalgānī*, The Forty Slaves of Sulṭān Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish of Delhi?", *Iran, Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, London, vol. X (1972), pp. 57-62. According to Irfan Habib, the number of these Turkish slave *amīrs* should not be taken in a literal sense, as they were not necessarily exactly forty in number. By using the number forty, Baranī had, in fact, implied that their number was quite limited. Irfan Habib, "Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century", in *Medieval India 1: Researches in the History of India (1200-1750)*, ed. Irfan Habib (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 16. For a different reading, see Khurram Qadir, "*Amiran-i Chihalgān* of Northern India", *Journal of Central Asia*, Centre for the Study of the Civilizations of Central Asia, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, vol. IV, no. 2 (December 1981), pp. 59-146.

⁹⁵ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 92.

⁹⁶ For details, see *ibid.*, pp. 100-109.

and eventually led to the massacre of Tājik officials by the Turkish *amīrs*.⁹⁷ A similar contest for power could be discerned between the Turkish and Khaljī groups, which erupted during the reign of Sultan Mu‘izz al-Dīn Kēqubād (r. 1286-90), the successor of Sultan Balban, which eventually culminated in the execution of the Sultan by a Khaljī *amīr*, and the accession of Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Khaljī in 1290, who was the head of the Khaljī *amīrs*.⁹⁸

Notwithstanding their internal differences, the *umarā’* showed a common hostility to new entrants of power from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. They used to join hands in the face of a common threat to their power and position. When after murdering Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī (r. 1316-20) in 1320, his *wazīr* Khusrau Khān, who was a convert of Indian parentage, became Sultan with the title of Nasir al-Dīn Khusrau Shāh and started favouring the Hindus, the ‘Alā’ī *amīrs* (advisers and high state officials) of Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī (r. 1296-1316) under the leadership of Ghāzī Malik defeated the forces of Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn, and unanimously placed Ghāzī Malik (Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, r. 1320-25) on the throne of Delhi.⁹⁹ It was the accession of an Indian to the throne of Delhi, and the ascendancy of the Hindus under him which was not altogether acceptable to the *umarā’* and which compelled them to join hands against

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 93. See also Irfan Habib, “Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century”, p. 17.

⁹⁸ Under Sultan Kēqubād, an experienced Khaljī *amīr* named Fīrūz Baghrash Khaljī rose to the position of ‘*ariḍ-i mamālik* (head of the military department) and was granted the title of Shā’ist Khān. The Turkish *amīrs* conspired against him as the Sultan, being ill, was unable to personally manage the affairs of the Sultanate. A violent military clash between the two groups was preempted, and the Khaljī *amīrs* placed Sultan Kēqubād’s son, Prince Kēkā’ūs, on the throne and himself became his vice-regent. However, the new Sultan could rule for three months only, as Shā’ist Khān himself ascended the throne with the title Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Khaljī in 1290. For details see Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 56-61.

⁹⁹ For details see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 415-23 and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 86-91.

Khusrau Shāh and dethrone him. In this way, the *umarā'* watched their group interests, and at the same time they safeguarded the larger interests of Muslim rule in the Sultanate as well. On critical occasions such as crisis of authority, they played a very crucial role in political developments. When Sultan Ārām Shāh proved ill-qualified to rule, the *umarā'* of Delhi wrote letters and invited Iletmish, the Governor of Badāyūn and Aybeg's son-in-law, to assume political power.¹⁰⁰

Consultation remained a hallmark of the state conduct by the Sultans of Delhi. The Sultans generally consulted their advisers, *umarā'*, ministers, and high state officials separately and/or together on important matters, but it would be erroneous to assume that there existed any permanent institution of advisory council, or even a loosely-formed body, in the Delhi Sultanate. Consultation remained an intermittent feature of the political system of the Sultanate. The number of advisers varied with every Sultan. Some Sultans reposed trust in their advisers, and accepted their advices and suggestions. For instance, the advisers of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī were responsible for introducing economic reforms, particularly the price control system, in the Sultanate.¹⁰¹ The Sultan was dissuaded by 'Alā' al-Mulk, the *kōtwāl* (head of the police department) of Delhi from introducing a new religion in the Sultanate, and cherishing the dream of becoming the Second Alexander by large-scale conquests.¹⁰² Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn also consulted his advisers, Malik Ḥamīd al-Dīn, Malik 'Izz al-Dīn and Malik 'Ayn al-Mulk Multānī, in

¹⁰⁰ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, p. 81 and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhi*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁰¹ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhi*, pp. 303-4.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 264-71.

order to determine the causes of frequent revolts in the Sultanate.¹⁰³ Similarly, he also consulted Qāḍī Mughīth al-Dīn on important matters.¹⁰⁴

The fourteenth century courtier, historian and political theorist, Ziyā' al-Dīn Baranī (b. 1285-d. 1360), had served as an adviser to Sultan Muḥammad bin Tughluq for seventeen years.¹⁰⁵ However, the Sultans of Delhi were not bound to accept the advice of the advisers, since many of them overruled the decisions and ignored the recommendations of their advisers. Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq used to over-rule his advisers in discussion.¹⁰⁶ In many cases, the Sultans of Delhi were guided by their favourites, such as Khusrau Khān, who was the confidant of Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī.¹⁰⁷

Owing to the growing power of the *umarā'* in the Sultanate, some Sultans of Delhi tried to curtail their powers and curb their influence in affairs of the state. Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban, who himself had been part of the *Umarā'-i Chihalganī*, sought to curtail the powers of this ruling clique by various measures, such as by giving poison secretly or by harsh punishments on mere suspicion of treason and conspiracy.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī also tried to restrain their powers by banning their private parties and gatherings, where they used to conspire against the Sultan.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 282-83.

¹⁰⁴ See details in Ibid., pp. 290-95.

¹⁰⁵ For instance, see Ibid., pp. 509-11.

¹⁰⁶ Habib, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, pp. 362-3, see also pp. 370-1.

¹⁰⁷ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 391-92.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 47-48.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 286-87. See also Kishori Saran Lal, *History of the Khaljis A.D. 1290-1320* (Karachi: Union Book Stall, n. d., rpt., first published 1950), pp. 174-6, and Ghulam Sarwar Khan Niazi, *The Life and Works of Sultan Alauddin Khalji* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1990), pp. 50-51.

2.6.4 Influence of Turco-Persian Political Traditions in the Delhi Sultanate

The political philosophy of the Sultanate was an amalgamation of rich and diverse political traditions. In addition to the political traditions of Islam, the political philosophy of the Sultanate was also informed by the Turkish (Central Asian), Sasanian (Ancient Persian), and local Hindu (Indian) traditions.¹¹⁰ These Turco-Persian elements were a legacy of the Buwayhids and Seljūqids, and operated within the broader framework of Sunnī Islam. Nonetheless, these traditions were considerably modified in view of the peculiar political, religious and socio-cultural conditions of India.

The Sultanate's political philosophy borrowed the tribal concept of leadership prevalent in Central Asia, which was based on the criterion of fitness to rule. In this tribal concept of leadership, every tribal leader considered himself a potential king, who was naturally supported by his tribe. Moreover, there was an element of equality and parity in the tribal political culture of the Turks. Though the Turkish slaves were largely 'detribalized', they still retained the principles of equality.¹¹¹ This tribal code of leadership was amalgamated with the principle of hereditary succession borrowed from ancient Persian Sasanian political traditions. In practice, the sons and grandsons of the Sultans (and sons-in-law in case of issueless Sultans) generally succeeded them, but only those who proved capable enough to manage the affairs of the Sultanate were allowed to

¹¹⁰ The political philosophy of the Sultanate seems to be predominantly influenced by the Central Asian or Turkish political traditions. As for the ancient Indian or Hindu political traditions, there seems to be a very minimal influence over the political traditions of the Sultanate of Delhi. For a brief discussion, see Hardy, "Growth of Authority over a Conquered Political Elite", pp. 224-31.

¹¹¹ Baranī records that the forty slaves of Iletmish had obtained greatness all at once, one did not bow to or obey another, and in receiving *iqṭa*'s (transferable revenue assignments), army, greatness and honour, everyone demanded equality and parity. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 27-28.

rule by the *umarā'*. Contrarily, the pleasure-seeking and worthless Sultans were soon deposed or dethroned.

From Persians, the Sultanate had also borrowed the concept of divine kingship, though modified to suit the needs of a Muslim polity. It has been mistakenly assumed that its source was the Shī'ite religio-political concept of Imamate. In fact, it was not, since the notion of Imamate implied a 'Divine Contract' between a ruler (*imām*) and God. The ruler acquired the ability to rule as a divine gift, not as a divine right.¹¹² The actual source of the concept of divine kingship was the pre-Islamic Sasanian political theory, which assumed that a king was a divine appointee. The Sasanian Emperors of ancient Persia had claimed divinity, and subsequently, an exclusive right of their family to rule. Although a Muslim king was not a divine incarnation in theory, yet he considered himself a 'shadow of God on earth.'¹¹³ Baranī has elaborated the political philosophy of the Sultanate. According to him, the Sultan enjoys a pivotal position in the polity, being the deputy, vicegerent and the shadow of God on earth.¹¹⁴ While portraying the Sultan as such, Baranī's aim was to glorify the position of the Sultan.

As for the political culture of the Sultanate, it was a blend of Turco-Persian elements. In matters of statecraft, the Turkish Sultans, Sanjar, Ṭughril, and Khwārizm Shāh, were considered to be the ideal rulers by the Sultans of Delhi. Like the courts of the

¹¹² Khurram Qadir, "The Political Theory and Practice of the Sultanate of Delhi", (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Bahauddin Zakariyya University, Multan, 1992), pp. 39-40.

¹¹³ Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290)* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1987), p. 7.

¹¹⁴ Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī, *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*, ed. with Introduction and Notes, Mrs. A. Salim Khan (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 1972), ff. 59b, 80b, 104ab, 187a.

ancient Sassanian Emperors, every Sultan of Delhi saw to it that his court was magnificently organized, and that it not only impressed the people by its grandeur and glory but also inspired awe and terror in their hearts. Toe-kissing (*paē' bōs*) or kissing the ground in the presence of the king as an expression of salutation was practiced in the Court of Delhi.¹¹⁵ The practice had been adopted by the 'Abbāsids, and was later passed on to the Sultans of Delhi through the Ghaznavids.¹¹⁶ Sultan Balban is said to have introduced Persian court etiquettes at the official level as observed by the Sasanian Emperors in ancient Persia. He attached much importance to outward pomp and show, and the decorum of the court and riding procession.¹¹⁷ The Persian New Year Festival of *Naurōz* was officially celebrated. In introducing the ancient Persian political traditions in the Sultanate, Balban's aim was political, i.e. to consolidate his political authority by enhancing the external dignity and prestige of the institution of kingship by pomp and show, and by striking awe in the hearts of the people. The high-sounding titles and epithets of Sultans, their palaces and imperial household, royal insignia and dresses, court, royal dinners and processions, which were the symbol of royalty in medieval times, all bore a Turco-Persian influence.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the language of court and administration was Persian. In addition to the above, owing to the marauding of West and Central Asia and Persia by the Mongols, there was a continuous flow of Persians as well as culturally 'Persianized' Muslims into India, which kept the ruling elite and Indian Muslims of the

¹¹⁵ Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Mubārak Ghaznavī condemned the practice of prostration in front of Sultan Iletmish. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 41.

¹¹⁶ Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 73. However, the people of religious sanctity were exempted from this obligation. For instance, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq did not let Ibn Baḥḥūtah kiss his feet. p. 74.

¹¹⁷ For details, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 25, 30-31. Balban also gave Persian names—Kēqubād, Kēmurth and Kēkā'ūs—to his grandsons born after his accession to the throne.

¹¹⁸ For their detailed study, see Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, passim.

urban areas in general, Persianized. The Turco-Persian aspects of the state culture were diffused in the society by the ruling elite.

2.6.5 Political Relations based on Trust and Loyalty

The political culture of the Sultanate was characterized by trust-based relationship between the Sultans of Delhi and their *umarā'*, the provincial governors, military commanders, and high officers of the state, since royal authority was founded on the ties of kinship, personal loyalty and clientship. For this reason, Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn had his own *Quṭbī amīrs*, Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish had *Shamsī amīrs*, Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī his *Jalālī amīrs*, 'Alā' al-Dīn his '*Alā'i amīrs*, and Afghan rulers their own Afghan *amīrs*.¹¹⁹ According to Peter Hardy, in medieval times, the idiom of authority and its acceptance was "the idiom of personal allegiance and loyalty between a grantor and a receiver of favours and of boons."¹²⁰ Whenever a new ruler assumed the royal authority, the *umarā'*, as well as the leading '*ulamā'* associated with the regime, endorsed his rule by paying personal homage and presenting gifts to him, which were symbolic of their submission to the political authority of the Sultan. In lieu of these, the new Sultan used to bestow robes of honour, titles, grants, money, promotion in ranks, horses, bejeweled weapons and other such gifts to them.¹²¹ These trust-based relations had rendered the nature of rule and authority personalized.

¹¹⁹ Rekha Pande, *Succession in the Delhi Sultanate* (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 1990), p. 186.

¹²⁰ Hardy, "The Authority of Muslim Kings", p. 46.

¹²¹ See Introduction in Richards, *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, p. 9.

The institution of slavery had further reinforced the element of personal loyalty in political relations. In this regard, the case of Sultan Iletmish's slaves (*bandagān-i Shamsi*) is quite illustrative, as there were close dyadic bonds between the slaves and the master. Under Iletmish, many of his slaves were recruited in the military. Among them, there was a core group of military slaves known as *bandagān-i khāṣṣ* (slaves associated with the Sultan), who were favoured and trusted most by the Sultan. It was because of the trust that these slaves were given governorships in newly conquered territories that were relatively far from the capital.¹²² Similarly, junior slaves were also given important positions. In fact, there seems to be a correlation between the increase in the *bandah's* responsibilities and the bonding between the Sultan and his slave; as the Sultan's confidence in his junior slaves increased, they were given greater responsibility and positions of more political importance.¹²³

These interpersonal relationships existed at all levels of the administrative hierarchy. The more profound the trust of the employer in the employee, the greater was the latter's opportunity for rising to prominent positions of authority. The recruitment and promotion of an individual depended either on his racial, ethnic, caste, clan or tribal affiliation, and/or on one or more of his personal achievements and qualities such as bravery, courage, skill, vision, intelligence and political acumen, or matrimonial relationship with the royal family, *umarā'* or the higher officers of the state.

¹²² Kumar, "When Slaves were Nobles", pp. 45-46.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

2.6.6 Racial and Ethnic Preferences in State Policies

The ruling elite of the Sultanate was chiefly composed of the migrant Muslims and their descendants, who constituted a mere fraction of the Indian population, which was predominantly Hindu by faith. The already narrow social base of the Muslim rule was further narrowed by the inequitable policies of some of the Sultans of Delhi, who discriminated among the people on the basis of their racial, ethnic and tribal identities.

The establishment of the Sultanate heralded the ushering of Turkish rule in India, as not only its founding dynasty was of Turkish origin, most of its succeeding ruling families came from the same ethnic background.¹²⁴ Irfan Habib talks of “twin racial elements in the nobility” in the thirteenth century, as it was a coalition of the Turks and the Tāziks or Tājiks.¹²⁵ The former generally occupied all the senior military positions, while the latter filled civil appointments.¹²⁶ However, the Sultans of early Turkish Empire displayed more selectiveness in appointments and promotions as compared to the successive dynasties.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ For a detailed discussion on the ethnic origin of the Sultans of Delhi, see Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, chap. 1, “Dynasties: Ethnic Origin and Features”, pp. 1-13.

¹²⁵ Irfan Habib, “Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century”, pp. 14-15. Habib further observes that the division between Turk and Tazik/Tajik corresponded with the one between slave or ex-slave and the free-born. p. 15. However, “despite the great cleavage between the Turks and the Taziks, and the slave and the free-born, the concept of a ‘composite’ ruling class still existed.” p. 20.

¹²⁶ Zafar Imam, *The Muslims of the Subcontinent* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1980), p. 7.

¹²⁷ Muztar argues that the critics who accuse the Sultans of Delhi of their bias against the non-Muslims subjects forget that the source of the exclusive thinking of the early Turkish Sultans of Delhi was racial and not religious or social. A. D. Muztar, “Non-Muslims under the Sultans of Delhi: (1206-1324)”, *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, University of the Punjab, Lahore, vol. XV, no. 4 (October 1978), p. 46.

The Turks tended to compose a racial polity, and had an air of competitiveness among themselves as well. Sultan Iletmish, Balban and their descendant kings belonged to the Ilbarī tribe of Turkistan, and favoured and promoted people of their own tribe. However, they did not exclude other Central Asian tribes from a share in power. Iletmish's *wazīr* Niẓām al-Mulk Junaydī was, for instance, a Tājik.

In the Muslim community that evolved in India there emerged two distinct social groups of the Muslims: the *ashrāf* (the 'high-born', i.e. the descendants of the migrants to India), and the *ajlāf* (the 'low-born', i.e. the new converts). The former were predominantly composed of the ruling elite, which included the Turks, Tājiks, Arabs, Persians, Afghans and the Mongols, whereas the latter consisted of the Indian converts. The ruling elite not only kept their social distance from them, but also suspected the conversion of low-caste Hindus to Islam, alleging them of opportunism and hence, distrusted them. These locals were socially and culturally considered inferior, and like the low-caste Hindus, they were also generally excluded from high official positions, barring very few exceptions. In fact, despite their conversion to Islam, the Hindu communities continued the practice of birth-ascribed ranks which they had had in the Hindu society.¹²⁸ Moreover, the Muslim rulers had also imbibed these racist cultural values from their Indian surroundings. However, the upper-caste Hindus, who accepted Islam, were

¹²⁸ For a detailed discussion, see Imtiaz Ahmed, ed., *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1973).

accorded respectable status by the state,¹²⁹ and in due course they were often assimilated into the *ashrāf*.¹³⁰

According to Baranī, Sultan Balban made sharp distinction between the people of high and low birth. He himself fabricated his descent from Afrāsiyāb, a famous mythical Turānian hero of the Persian epic, *Shahnāmah* (The Book of Kings),¹³¹ which had seized the imagination of the early Muslim migrants to India. As pointed out earlier, the Buwayhid kings had fabricated genealogies linking their lineage to the ancient Persian or Sasanian monarchs. By doing so, Balban tried to assert his superiority over the masses and justify or legitimise his claim to the throne of Delhi. He not only refused to appoint any low-born to any administrative office but also saw to it that all low-born people were dismissed from important positions. Balban is said to have once said: “When I happen to look at a low-born person, every artery and vein in my body begins to agitate with fury.”¹³² For the purpose of determining the family status of government officials, expert genealogists were employed in the court. According to Baranī, when a certain person of Indian origin named Kamāl Mahyār was recommended to him for the post of governor of

¹²⁹ For instance, the eleven sons of the Hindu raja of Kampila, who had accepted Islam after being defeated by the forces of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, were given high posts in the Delhi Sultanate. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, p. 163.

¹³⁰ Ishtiaq Ahmed, “South Asia”, in *Islam Outside the Arab World*, ed. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999), pp. 213-14. Zafar Ahmad has termed the phenomenon as ‘status group distinction’. Idem, *Islam and Muslims in South Asia* (New Delhi: Authorspress, 2000), pp. 35-53.

¹³¹ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhi*, pp. 37, 39. The racial hatred and superiority complex of Sultan Balban was partly rooted in his inferiority complex owing to his slave status. He originally belonged to *Ilbari* clan of the Turks, but was sold as a slave in infancy. Later, he became the member of *Shamsi Bandagān*. p. 25.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Amrohā, the Sultan dismissed the suggestion after finding out that he was a convert.¹³³ Moreover, it is said that during twenty-two years of his reign, Balban did not talk to any ordinary or low-born person.¹³⁴ Thus, the new aspirants to power--the Hindu converts--were almost excluded from high official services, barring very few exceptions. Sultan Balban, for instance, despite his strong racism employed Malik 'Imād al-Mulk Ravāt--a person of Indian parentage as his 'arīd (head of the military department).¹³⁵ Another Indian, Malik 'Imād al-Dīn Rayhān was appointed *wakīl-i dar* (superintendent of the ceremonies at the court and palace).¹³⁶ But these were extremely rare exceptions. However, Balban's successor, Sultan Kēqubād, had no prejudices against the people on the grounds of birth, as Malik Kamāl al-Dīn Mahyār was a member of his core group of *umarā'*.¹³⁷ Moreover, the Mongol converts, who settled in Delhi and had close relations with the *umarā'*, enjoyed good positions in Kēqubād's court.¹³⁸

The Khaljī government was relatively more tolerant and inclusive as compared to the early Turkish Sultans, as the Khaljīs did not attach much importance to lineage while making appointments. Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khajlī's *Qāḍī-i Mamālik* (chief *qāḍī*), Ḥamīd al-Dīn Multānī,¹³⁹ and military commander, 'Ayn al-Mulk Multānī,¹⁴⁰ both of whom were of Indian parentage, are examples in point. Moreover, the Afghans also rose to high

¹³³ Ibid., p. 36. However, Baranī's narrative is not without contradictions, as the incident of Kamāl Mahyār is narrated by Baranī on the authority of Khwājah Tāj al-Dīn Makrānī, who was a close associate of Sultan Balban according to Baranī. The Khwājah's name indicates that he was probably an Indian by birth, but he had acquired high status and prestige in the eyes of the king. p. 36.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 33, for details of Sultan Iltmish's and Balban's racialism, see pp. 29-30, 37-39.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 114-15.

¹³⁶ Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions*, pp. 235, 238.

¹³⁷ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 126.

¹³⁸ Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 296.

¹³⁹ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 352.

¹⁴⁰ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 77.

positions under the Khaljīs. Nevertheless, in this respect, the Tughluq era was marked by considerable upward mobility in the *umarā'*. According to a modern historian, after the inception of the Tughluq rule, the Afghans emerged as a 'new social formation' in the Indo-Muslim society,¹⁴¹ as they rose to positions of prominence. In addition to the migrants such as the Afghans and the Abyssinians,¹⁴² Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq is said to have even promoted those who belonged to the lower strata of the Hindu society.¹⁴³ The *wazīr* of his successor, Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq, was Malik Maqbūl (*Khān-i Jahān*), an Indian convert.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the existing ruling elite in general disapproved appointments of Indians to high positions. The biases prevailing among the ruling elite against the so-called low-born people (the Hindus and new convert Muslims of Indian origin) are clearly reflected in the views of Baranī, who advised the kings to debar the base-born from the official positions.¹⁴⁵ Baranī, who had served for nearly seventeen years at the court of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, was critical of the so-called low-born people getting higher ranks in military and administrative hierarchy, as this had minimized the opportunities for getting good official positions by the *ashraf*. As a result of the discriminatory policies of the Sultanate, not only its social base remained narrow, the process of cultural and social assimilation and integration was also considerably retarded.

¹⁴¹ Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, "The Afghans and their Emergence in India as Ruling Elite During the Delhi Sultanate Period", *Central Asian Journal*, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, vol. 26 (1982), pp. 252-53.

¹⁴² Under Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, an Abyssinian named Badr Ḥabshī was the in-charge of 'Alāpur near Gwāliār. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, p. 31.

¹⁴³ Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, "Social Mobility in the Delhi Sultanate", in *Medieval India 1*, ed. Irfan Habib, pp. 27-28.

¹⁴⁴ Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India under Muhammedan Rule*, p. 142.

¹⁴⁵ Irfan Habib, "Ziyā Baranī's Vision of the State", *The Medieval History Journal*, New Delhi, vol. 2, no. 1 (1998), pp. 31-32.

2.6.7 Influence of the ‘*Ulamā*’ on the Sultans and Policies of the Sultanate

In the Sultanate of Delhi, religion and politics did not constitute two independent realms. In fact, in all medieval Muslim polities, it was difficult to conceive of one without the other, as religion and politics were closely intertwined. In the Sultanate of Delhi, religion was closely associated with political power, as the political authority was closely tied to the religious authority, which had traditionally been enjoyed by the ‘*ulamā*’ (jurists, theologians and religious scholars).

During the early phase of the Delhi Sultanate, many ‘*ulamā*’ had migrated from Nishāpur, Şin‘ān, Ghaznīn, Kāshān, Balkh, Sijistān, Khwārizm and Tabrīz, as indicated from their names, and had settled in the Sultanate. Owing to Muslim rule in India, they were able to consolidate their position.¹⁴⁶ The ‘*ulamā*’ of the Sultanate cannot be treated as a monolithic group, and hence, a homogenous category; rather they were quite diverse in their political and religious orientations. Some of them were closely allied with the state, and had acquired considerable influence at the court as well, whereas some of them kept aloof from state and politics. Similarly, some of them were anti-Sufism, whereas others had inclination towards Sufism. As we shall see later, the ‘*ulamā*’ influenced the policies of the Sultanate to a considerable degree. A number of incidents from the Sultanate’s history suggest that on many occasions, despite their unwillingness, the Sultans of Delhi had to succumb to the demands of the ‘*ulamā*’. Sultan Iletmish and later Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq was pressed hard by the ‘*ulamā*’ at official positions to summon

¹⁴⁶ Saiyyid Şabāḥ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Hindustān kē Salāṭīn*, ‘*Ulamā*’ aur *Mashā’ikh kē Ta’lluqāt par ēk Nazār* (A’zāmgarḥ: Ma’arif Press, 1964), p. 9.

Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn of Nāgaur¹⁴⁷ and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' and have a public debate on the issue of *samā'* at the court, and it was not easy to ignore their influence or sustain their pressure.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, in case of Saiyyidī Muwallih, Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī tried to arrange an ordeal of fire-walking in order to prove the Saiyyidī's miraculous powers. When the Sultan sought its approval from the 'ulamā', they refused it.¹⁴⁹

The 'ulamā' were appointed to various administrative positions in the Sultanate. These included the following: *Shaykh al-Islām*¹⁵⁰ (literally meaning the chief of Islam) was a permanent position or office in the administrative structure of the Sultanate. *Shaykh al-Islām* was in-charge of the ecclesiastical affairs of the Sultanate.¹⁵¹ It was also an honorific title conferred upon eminent religious scholars by the Delhi Sultans, but two persons could not bear the title in the same place simultaneously. Its recipients were given both stipends and land grants but, in lieu of that, they were not supposed to perform any functions. However, the office of *Shaykh al-Islām* did perform the symbolic function of extending legitimacy to the rule. The office of *Shaykh al-Islām* is not to be confused with that of *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr* or *Ṣadr-i Jahān*, who was in-charge of religious and judicial affairs in the Sultanate.¹⁵² This important post was generally occupied by an eminent scholar or jurist. 'Ulamā' were also appointed for the performance of juridical functions.

¹⁴⁷ 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭin*, pp. 112-14.

¹⁴⁸ See details in chap. 4 of this study, pp. 333-38 (infra).

¹⁴⁹ For details of the incident, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 208-12.

¹⁵⁰ The title first appeared in Khurasan towards the end of the tenth century. See a brief discussion on the origin of the term in early Islamic history in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. IX, art. *Shaykh al-Islām*, sec. I, *Early History of the Term* by J. H. Kramers-[R. W. Bulliet], pp. 399-400.

¹⁵¹ Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, p. 14.

¹⁵² The *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr* was also the *Qāḍī-i Mamālik* (the chief judge of the Sultanate). Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 157.

The *qāḍīs* (judges) dealt with civil disputes, and were appointed in every town having Muslim population in order to perform juridical as well as other functions. There used to be a separate *qāḍī* for the army, known as *qāḍī-i lashkar*. In Delhi, the capital of the Sultanate, the *Qāḍī-i Mamālik* (the chief *qāḍī*) was appointed. Minhāj al-Sirāj Juzjānī¹⁵³ (the author of *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri* composed in 1256), who held all important offices including *qāḍī*, *khaṭīb* (literally meaning the one who delivers sermons, the preacher) and *imām* (prayer leader) simultaneously,¹⁵⁴ was the *qāḍī* of Delhi under Sultan Iltutmish. Juzjānī himself recounts that he delivered ninety-five discourses before the Sultan at a private pavilion in a matter of a few months.¹⁵⁵ Since Juzjānī had an inclination towards Sufism, it was because of him that despite objections from other ‘*ulamā*’, the *samā’* gatherings, especially of the Chishtis, were permitted in Delhi.¹⁵⁶

In addition to the *qāḍīs*, there were *muftīs* (the ‘*ulamā*’ who had the authority to issue an edict or *fatwā*). Important matters were referred to the *muftīs*, who used to issue *fatwās* on them, and only then the *qāḍīs* could act. For this reason, the *muftīs* in the Sultanate enjoyed esteem and respect at large. Moreover, there were *muḥtasibs* (the censor of public morals), who were required to check illegal practices and punish the

¹⁵³ For a brief biographical sketch and political career, see Mumtaz Moin, “Qāḍī Minhāj al-Dīn Sirāj al-Juzjānī”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XV, part III (July 1967), pp. 163-74.

¹⁵⁴ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, p. 86.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

¹⁵⁶ It is said that he had legalized the institution of *samā’* in Delhi during his *qāḍā*’ship. Amīr Ḥasan ‘Alā’ Sijzī Dehlevī, *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*, (*malfūz* of Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’) ed. Khwājah Ḥasan Thānī Nizāmī Dehlevī (Delhi: Urdu Academy, 1992 rpt., first published 1990), p. 407. This edition contains Persian text along with its Urdu translation by Khwājah Ḥasan Thānī Nizāmī Dehlevī. It is an exact duplicate (including pagination and critical commentary) of Muḥammad Latīf Malik’s edition published from Lahore: Malik Sirāj al-Dīn and Sons, 1966.

wrong doers.¹⁵⁷ The *khaṭībs* or *imāms* of mosques led a prosperous life, as they were paid by the government. They also commanded respect in the Muslim society at large.

2.6.8 Interplay of Religion and Politics

Apart from the role of ‘*ulamā*’ in state and politics, the symbiotic relationship between religion and politics in the Sultanate is also evident from the high-sounding titles and epithets used by the Sultans, having overt claims to religious authority. One of the many titles of Sultan Iletmish was *Zill Allāh fi al-‘Ālamīn* (the shadow of God in the worlds).¹⁵⁸ The Sultans of Delhi were regarded as *Zill Allāh fi ‘l-Arḍ* (the Shadow of God on earth),¹⁵⁹ though later the practice of assuming this title was discontinued. This grandiose title was introduced by Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr (r. 754-75), the second ‘Abbāsīd Caliph for the first time. The political philosophy of the Sultanate also reflected the use of religious symbols. Leaving aside very few exceptions, all the Sultans of Delhi after accession to the throne assumed titles reflecting vital importance of religion to their claims for rulership. These included the titles of Quṭb al-Dīn adopted by Aybeg, Shams al-Dīn by Iletmish, Rukn al-Dīn by Fīrūz ibn Iletmish, Mu‘izz al-Dīn by Bahrām Shāh, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn by Mas‘ūd, Mu‘izz al-Dīn by Kēqubād, Nāṣir al-Dīn by Maḥmūd ibn Iletmish, Ghiyāth al-Dīn by Balban, Jalāl al-Dīn by Fīrūz Khaljī, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn by Muḥammad ‘Alī Garshāsp, Quṭb al-Dīn by Mubārak Khaljī, Nāṣir al-Dīn by Khusrau Shāh, and Ghiyāth al-Dīn by Ghāzī Malik Tughluq. (See a list of real names and titles of Delhi Sultans in Appendix III)

¹⁵⁷ For a detailed discussion on the functions of *muhtasib*, see Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, pp. 164-69.

¹⁵⁸ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁹ Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions*, p. 333.

Various statements of Baranī clearly reveal the effort to sanctify the office of the Sultan and render his personality sacrosanct in the eyes of the masses. In his words, for instance, “excluding the functions of a prophet, there is no work as great and noble as the task of government.”¹⁶⁰ He further adds that kingship is a great blessing, and the highest office of the world. Kingly office is the creation of God and is received from Him alone. The heart of a king reflects the glory of God.¹⁶¹

As mentioned above, the protection of religion or *dīnpanāhī* was considered to be a prime duty of, and an important function to be performed by a Sultan, according to medieval Muslim political theorists. The statement of Baranī reflects its significance:

Even if the ruler were to perform every day a thousand *rak'a* of prayer, keep fast all his life, do nothing prohibited, and spend all the treasury for the sake of God, and yet not practice *dīnpanāhī*, not devote his strength and energy in the destruction, lowering and debasing of the enemies of God and His Prophet, not try to honour the orders of the *Shari'ah*, and not show in his dominion the splendour of ordering the good and prohibiting the forbidden...then his place would be nowhere but in Hell.¹⁶²

The notion of the protection of religion served as one of the means of acquiring legitimacy for the rule of the Sultans of Delhi by winning over the Muslim sentiments. In the opinion of K. M. Ashraf, the Sultan “may not have been a believing Muslim in his private life or cared seriously for the welfare of the faith, but he had to maintain an outward show of respect for the rituals and the symbols of Islam... A show of respect to

¹⁶⁰ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 27.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Islam further enhanced the prestige of the ruler.”¹⁶³ For this reason, the Sultans also made public manifestations of their sincerity and respect towards the Sufis and the ‘*ulamā*’. According to Nizami, right from the inception of Muslim rule in India, there was a constant endeavour on the part of the Muslim kings to win over the Sufis not always out of conviction but out of expediency. They wanted to exploit the Sufis and the ‘*ulamā*’ to their own purposes and make use of their influence over the people.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, this does not detract from the fact that many of the Sultans of Delhi sincerely held some of the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis in high esteem.

2.6.9 Role of Public Opinion

In the Sultanate of Delhi, public opinion and public preferences, though not fully taken into consideration, were not easy to ignore. A Sultan could not face widespread resentment and incur displeasure from the masses. Particularly, the public opinion in Delhi served as a check on the Sultans of Delhi. The *kōtwāl* of Delhi, who was the head of the police department, represented the public opinion, and served as a bridge between the people and the Sultan. Moreover, most of the Sultans had profound respect for the *Sharī‘ah*, and it was difficult for them and other state officials on high administrative positions to disregard the injunctions of the *Sharī‘ah* openly. This is because the public opinion in Muslim lands firmly held to the supremacy of the *Sharī‘ah*.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Kunwar Muhammad Ashraf, “Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan (1200-1500 A.D.)—mainly based on Islamic sources”, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters*, Calcutta, vol. 1 (1935), p. 135. (rpt., Karachi: Indus Publications, 1978).

¹⁶⁴ K. A. Nizami, “Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and Their Attitude towards the State”, *Islamic Culture*, The Hyderabad Quarterly Review, Hyderabad, Deccan, vol. XXII (October 1948), (rpt., New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), p. 388.

¹⁶⁵ Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 42, 44.

The populace of Delhi played a crucial role in many significant political developments. For instance, the accession of Sultana Raḍiyyah (r. 1236-1240)—the only queen to sit on the throne of Delhi—was indicative of the role of the people of Delhi in decision-making in the Sultanate. She was placed on the throne at the insistence of the populace of Delhi.¹⁶⁶ The entrance of Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Khaljī, who had replaced the Ilbarī Sultans, in Delhi was interrupted by the people.¹⁶⁷ Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī is said to have intended to introduce a new religion but he was prevented from doing so by Malik ‘Alā’ al-Mulk, the *kōtwāl* of Delhi, who feared adverse reaction from the people.¹⁶⁸ The people of Multan murdered Malik Mughlatī (the *wālī* of Multan) who had refused to support Ghāzī Malik Tughluq against Khusrau Khān,¹⁶⁹ who had usurped the throne of Delhi after murdering Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī. Similarly, it was owing to the growing public pressure that Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq reversed the decision of establishing a second capital at Dēvāgīr/Dēōgīr (Dawlatabād) in Deccan.¹⁷⁰ These and many other instances in the history of the Sultanate amply prove that the people had a voice in the policies of the government, and in some cases, the state also tried to respect their wishes, and respond to the popular demands.

¹⁶⁶ After the death of Sultan Iletmish, the *umarā’* had set aside the will of the deceased Sultan by not allowing his daughter Raḍiyyah to ascend the throne, and instead they had made Iletmish’s son, Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz, the next Sultan. When Sultan Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz’s mother Shāh Turkān conspired to kill Raḍiyyah, the populace of Delhi attacked the palace and seized Shāh Turkān. Upon this, the *umarā’* placed Raḍiyyah on the throne of Delhi. Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāsirī*, pp. 93-94. See also Jamila Brijbhushan, *Sultan Raziya: Her Life and Times: A Reappraisal* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1990), pp. 14-15. However, Jackson rejects the statement of Juzjānī, and argues that Rukn al-Dīn had been nominated heir by Sultan Iletmish. See details in Peter Jackson, “Sultan Raḍiyya Bint Iltutmish” in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage and Piety*, ed. Gavin R. G. Hambly (Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 183-84.

¹⁶⁷ See details in Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 172.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 263-66.

¹⁶⁹ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 89.

¹⁷⁰ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 481.

2.6.10 Political Control and Administrative Penetration

Though the Sultanate of Delhi used both overt and covert channels of political control in order to sustain and perpetuate the rule,¹⁷¹ historians have a consensus that the Sultans of Delhi did not attempt to “prescribe standards of conduct and modes of behaviour for the population at large—custom, the differing religious traditions and codes of conduct prevailed.”¹⁷²

As in other medieval polities, there was a lack of uniformity in administrative penetration and political control over its various regions in the Delhi Sultanate. At the centre, there was direct political control of the state, but it used to diffuse as one moved away from the centre towards the peripheral regions or border areas. Moreover, in provincial capitals, garrison towns and important cities, there was relatively strong political control as compared to the rural areas, which were almost semi-autonomous. Gellner is of the opinion that in the pre-modern traditional polities, some of the local communities exercised independence from any centre of control. He adds that despite the existence of monarchical polities in traditional agrarian world, there were internally well-organized, self-administering and more or less autonomous sub-communities.¹⁷³

In a more formal sense, various regions in the Sultanate enjoyed different political status. For instance, the *iqta'*, which was not only transferable revenue assignment but also a unit of administration, was under the direct control of the Sultan or the centre. The

¹⁷¹ For a detailed study, see Tanvir Anjum, “Conceptualizing State and State Control in Medieval India”, *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, Faculty of Social Sciences, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, vol. XXIV-VI (1998-2000 Combined Number), pp. 85-106.

¹⁷² Hardy, “The Authority of Muslim Kings”, p. 41.

¹⁷³ Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 6.

administrative machinery of the Sultanate existed in the *iqṭa*'s. Similarly, the *wālis* (like present-day provincial governors) controlled their respective *wilāyats*, which was a province-like unit of administration directly controlled by the centre. Contrary to these arrangements, there existed tributary states as well. For instance, there were tributary states in Deccan under Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī, which were indirectly ruled by him. Having independent Hindu rulers or rajas of their own, these areas enjoyed almost complete autonomy but they used to pay annual tribute to the Sultanate.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, the region of Bengal (Lakhnautī) enjoyed a unique political status, as the region was referred to as an *aqlīm*. It was ruled by semi-independent Muslim kings, who occasionally used to send *khirāj* to the centre.¹⁷⁵ Thus, there existed graded levels of political authority in the Sultanate, based on the disparate political statuses of various regions and territories. In fact, the problem of administrative penetration was directly linked to the territorial stretch of the Empire; greater the territorial extent, lesser the degree of political control and administrative penetration. In the opinion of Kulke and Rothermund, historically, the Sultanate of Delhi had transgressed the regional boundaries in the Indian sub-continent and assumed the contours of an Indian Empire, which in a way became "the precursor of the present highly centralized national state. These transgressions were intermittent only, but they certainly surpassed anything achieved by the early medieval Hindu kingdoms."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ 'Alā' al-Dīn had decided to indirectly rule the far-flung areas of Deccan instead of directly controlling them. Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, pp. 233-42.

¹⁷⁵ For instance, Sultan Balban had appointed his son Bughrā Khān as the *wālī* of the *aqlīm* of Lakhnautī. Later, the region became semi-independent, and consequently, it came to be ruled by the descendants of Bughrā Khān. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 92.

¹⁷⁶ Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India*, 3d ed., (London and New York: Routledge, 1999 rpt., first published 1986), p. 169.

To sum up, the emergence of Muslim rule in India was the result of a protracted process, and it took centuries for the Muslim rule to be firmly established in north India. The varied characteristics of political authority that emerged during the thirteen and fourteenth centuries under the Sultans of Delhi indicate the complexity of the state conduct, exercise of power and social processes in the Sultanate. Given the multiplicity of political actors and factors, this complex arrangement needs to be taken into account while studying the relationship of the Sultanate of Delhi with any segment or section of society. Having explored the emergence of Muslim rule in India and the characteristics of political authority in the Sultanate of Delhi, it seems pertinent to turn to the relationship of the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi.

CHAPTER 3

Chishtī *Silsilah* in India, and Carving out its Space in the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1236)

Having passed through its formative phase in the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, Sufism entered a new phase when it spread far and wide in the wake of the crystallization of Sufi *silsilahs*. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Sufism had made its presence felt even in the peripheries of the Muslim lands. It had a wide-ranging appeal among people in the urban environments as well as in semi-urban and rural settings. Some Sufis migrated from Central and Western Asia, Persia, Iraq and Afghanistan to the north-western Indian regions and chose to make India their permanent abode. The two earliest *silsilahs* that were introduced in India were the Chishtiyyah and Suhrawardiyyah. Both of them originated outside India, but the Chishtiyyah mainly flourished in India in the succeeding centuries. The Chishtī *Silsilah* was introduced in India by Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer. Shortly after his arrival in India, and his settling down at Ajmer, the foundation of the Sultanate of Delhi was laid in northern India. During the next three decades, the Chishtī *Silsilah* strengthened its foundations and spiritual traditions and worked out its principles, while the Delhi Sultanate consolidated its political authority. The Chishtī Shaykhs of this era distanced themselves from the kings, *umarā’*, and the court, and hence, successfully carved out a space of their own in the Sultanate of Delhi,

where there was practically no interference of the state, and the Chishtīs could practice the principles of their *Silsilah* in an unhindered way. In this period, the relationship between the Chishtī Sufis and the Sultans of Delhi was one of mutual respect.

The present chapter is divided into two sections. Section I explores the emergence of Chishtī *Silsilah* and the attitude of the early Chishtīs outside India towards state and political power. It also briefly discusses the advent of Sufism in India and the subsequent introduction of Chishtī *Silsilah* there. Section II investigates the relationship of the early Indian Chishtī Sufis with the Sultanate of Delhi, and covers a period of almost three decades. In particular, it discusses the relationship of the early Chishtīs with the Sultans of Delhi and the ‘*ulamā*’, particularly those who occupied government positions in the Sultanate.

Section I Genesis and Development of Chishtī *Silsilah*, and its Introduction in India

Before the introduction of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India by Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī towards the close of the twelfth century, the pre-Indian or early Chishtī Sufis of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries had evolved the doctrines and traditions of their *Silsilah*, which were developed further in India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The ensuing discussion is focused on the emergence and growth of the Chishtī *Silsilah* and its doctrines and practices, along with its introduction in India by Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī.

3.1 Emergence of Chishtī *Silsilah*, and the Doctrines of Early Chishtīs outside India

A tenth-century Sufī Khwājah Abū Ishāq Shāmī (d. 940) is regarded as the founder of the Chishtī *Silsilah*. As his name indicates, he initially belonged to Syria (Shām). The name of the *Silsilah* is derived from Chisht, a village near Herat in the province of Khurasān (eastern Persia), which is nowadays situated in Afghanistan. It is from there that the Chishtī *Silsilah* is said to have originated as Khwājah Abū Ishāq Shāmī settled there at the instance of his spiritual preceptor, Khwājah ‘Alū Dīnawarī, which is situated in Kuhistān, between Hamadān and Baghdad.

As for the epithet Chishtī, the Sufīs connected with this *Silsilah* later on came to be known as Chishtīs. Khwājah Abū Ishāq Shāmī was also the first Sufī of the Chishtīyah tradition to acquire the epithet Chishtī. In fact, he was advised by his preceptor to change his *nisbah* (identity) from Shāmī to Chishtī.¹ Likewise, his followers also adopted the epithet of Chishtī.

The use of music in spiritual practices of the Chishtīs, known as *samā’*, was their characteristic feature from the earliest days. According to one view, the wandering Chishtī *darvēshes* were known as *Chist* or *Chisht*. It was customary among them to enter a town and play musical instruments such as flute and drums in order to gather the people, and then recite a tale or legend of initiatory significance. Similar practices have been traced in Europe as well, where the Spanish *chistu* is referred to as a kind of

¹ *Encyclopedia Iranica*, art. Abu Eshaq Sami by Mutiul Imam, p. 280.

itinerant jester with almost similar garb and instruments.² Therefore, the epithet Chishtī might have been derived from the title of the wandering Chishtī *darvēshes* playing musical instruments. However, the earlier view that the epithet Chishtī was derived from the name of a village called Chisht seems more plausible.

The Chishtīs trace their spiritual lineage or initiatic genealogy as such:³

1. Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) (d. 632)
2. ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 661)
3. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728)
4. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd (d. 793)
5. Abū ‘Alī al-Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyāḍ (d. 802)
6. Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 779)
7. Sadīd al-Dīn Hudhayfah al-Mar’ashī (d. 822)
8. Amīn al-Dīn Hubayrah al-Baṣrī
9. ‘Alū Dīnawarī
10. Abū Ishāq Chishtī (d. 940)
11. Abū Aḥmad ibn Farasnafah Chishtī (d. 966)
12. Abū Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Chishtī (d. 1020)
13. Abū Yūsuf Chishtī (d. 1067)
14. Mawdūd Chishtī (d. 1126)
15. Ḥājī Sharīf Zandanī
16. ‘Uthmān Hārwanī (d. 1211)
17. Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī (d. 1236)

² Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), p. 127.

³ Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. xi. For brief biographical sketches of Sufis from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib to ‘Uthmān Hārwanī, see Mīr ‘Abd al-Wāḥid Bilgrāmī, *Saba’ Sanābil*, (comp. in 969 A.H.), Urdu trans. Muftī Muḥammad Khalīl Khān Barakātī (Lahore: Ḥāmid and Co., n.d.), pp. 405-36.

In order to trace the origin of the Chishtī traditions and their attitude regarding political power, we need to explore the traditions of the early Sufis even before the emergence of the Chishtī *Silsilah* from Khwājah Abū Ishāq Chishtī.

As already discussed in the preceding chapter, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī led a very simple life, and preferred poverty to wealth and riches.⁴ ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd, the pupil-disciple of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, as indicated above in the initiatic genealogy of the Chishtīs, had constructed an early *ribāṭ* on Abbadān Island on the Persian Gulf.⁵ Here the choice of place for constructing his Sufī lodging holds some significance: being established on an island, it was not only away from the hustle and bustle of urban life, it was also relatively free from any interference from the political authorities.

As mentioned earlier, once Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyāḍ, an eminent disciple of ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd, not only severely reprimanded the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd for the abuse of power, but also exhorted him to dispense justice, consider his high office to be a trial, and fear God. Moreover, Fuḍayl refused to accept the cash offering from the Caliph,⁶ a characteristic so typical of the Indian Chishtīs during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Another celebrated early Sufī in the Chishtī initiatic genealogy was Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, initially a Prince of Balkh, who had abandoned royal grandeur to choose the austere Sufī way of life. For this reason, he was bestowed the titles of *Sulṭān al-Sālikīn* (King of devotees), and *Tārik al-Mamlakat-o Sulṭanat* (One who has abandoned the state and authority). He refused to accept a huge cash grant from a wealthy person,

⁴ Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, pp. 33-34.

⁵ Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 5, and Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 31.

⁶ For details see ‘Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā*’, vol. 1, pp. 80-2.

and preferred poverty to riches.⁷ The title of ‘Alū Dīnawārī, *Shams al-Fuqarā’*,⁸ (literally meaning the Sun of the poor) is indicative of the same tradition of voluntarily adopting poverty as a way of life.

Little is known about Khwājah Abū Ishāq (d. 940) and his spiritual descendants who lived outside India. However, on the basis of whatever scanty information is available about them, some inferences can be drawn regarding their attitude towards political authorities. The founder of the *Silsilah*, Khwājah Abū Ishāq led a life of austerity, renunciation and poverty. Once he told his disciple Khwājah Abū Aḥmad Chishtī: “Abū Aḥmad! *darvēshī* (austerity or renunciation) is greater in value than kingship of Arab and ‘Ajam (Persia). If Abū Ishāq is offered Solomon’s Kingdom, by God, he will not accept it.”⁹ This statement not only throws ample light on the early Chishtī traditions regarding rejection of worldly riches, and adoption of voluntary poverty, it also reflects the attitude of Khwājah Abū Ishāq towards political power, which he considered of no value as compared to the high ideals of renunciation and poverty. Moreover, it is important to note that as a centre for his and his disciples’ spiritual activities, he was asked by his spiritual preceptor Khwājah Abū Ishāq to choose Chisht—a remote town in Persia, away from the centers of political power.

⁷ Ibid., p. 94.

⁸ Saiyyid Muḥammad Mubārak ‘Alawī Kirmānī alias Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, (comp. in 1351-82 A.D.), ed. Chiranjī Lāl (Delhi: Muḥibb-i Hind Press, 1302 A.H./1885 A.D.), pp. 39, 234. Henceforth, referred to as Amīr Khūrd.

⁹ Bahā’ ibn Maḥmūd, *Risālah-’i Aḥwāl-i Pīrān-i Chisht*, MS, n.d., Personal Collection of K. A. Nizami, as cited in Nizāmī, *Tārīkh-i Mashā’ikh-i Chisht*, p. 192. Bahā’ ibn Maḥmūd was a grandson of Makhdūm Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī alias Barājā.

The early or pre-Indian Chishtīs did not accept presents or grants from the state. When Abū Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Chishtī (d. 1020) was offered some presents by a prince, he declined to accept them and remarked: "None of our elder Sufis has accepted such things."¹⁰ This tradition of non-acceptance of gifts and grants from the rulers and high state officials was strictly followed by the later Chishtī Sufis in India during the period under study.

The titles of early Chishtī Sufis outside India indicate quite overt political connotations. These titles were generally bestowed by the Sufi Shaykhs on their eminent disciples. For instance, Khwājah Abū Ishāq's *khalīfah*, Khwājah Abū Aḥmad Chishtī (d. 966), was titled *Sulṭān al-Aṣfiyā'*, literally meaning the King of the Sufis.¹¹ Similarly, Abū Yūsuf Chishtī (d. 1067) was bestowed the title of *Nāṣir al-Millat wa al-Dīn*,¹² literally meaning the Helper of the faith and *dīn*. It is significant to recall here that it was customary among the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs to adopt such titles themselves, as well as bestow the same on the rulers of regional semi-independent kingdoms as a symbol of recognition. In this regard, the title of Khwājah Mawdūd Chishtī is more suggestive, being laden with political meanings. He was granted the title of *Zill Allāh fī al-khalq* (Shadow of God on people)¹³, which resembles the grandiose title *Zill Allāh fī al-arḍ* (Shadow of God on earth) assumed by the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs. The title of Khwājah Mawdūd indicates a similarity between the authority of the Sufis and that of the custodians of political authority, or at least drawing parallels between the two loci of

¹⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 40-1.

¹¹ *Anwār-i Aṣfiyā'*, p. 71; for a brief biographical note, see pp. 73-75.

¹² Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 41. For a brief biographical note, see *Anwār-i Aṣfiyā'*, pp. 95-96.

¹³ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 42. For a brief biographical note, see *Anwār-i Aṣfiyā'*, pp. 112-14.

authority. Khwājah Mawdūd Chishtī had granted the title of *Shāh*, literally meaning a king, to one of his disciples named Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd (Shāh Sanjān).¹⁴ Other titles of the early Chishtī Sufis such as *Sulṭān al-Aṣfiyā'* and *Malik al-Awliyā'* also bear overt political connotations since the titles of *Sulṭān* and *Malik* were used by the kings and the members of the ruling elite. Similarly, the Sufis of the *silsilahs* originating in Central Asia and Khurasan, such as the Chishtiyyah and the Naqshbandiyyah, often referred to their Sufi Shaykhs by the distinctive epithet Khwājah, meaning lord. It was for this reason that the Naqshbandiyyah *Silsilah* also came to be known as *Silsilah-i Khwājagān*. Again the term Khwājah implies a political undertone, as it was originally used as a title for a lord, master, noble, or an aristocrat.

It can be inferred that the early Chishtī Sufis outside India kept themselves aloof from state and political affairs. They never accepted land grants or official positions and titles from the kings. These attitudes and responses towards political power, which became the hallmarks of Chishtī traditions in India, were institutionalized during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These traditions, nonetheless, could not be continued later on.

3.2 Advent of Sufism and Chishtī *Silsilah* in India

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, many Muslim Arab traders visiting India for trade had established their settlements along the western and north-eastern coasts of India. These settlements were the hub of missionary activities, which considerably facilitated the spread of Islam in these peripheral regions of India. Islam was spread in the

¹⁴ Dārā Shikōh, *Safinat al-Awliyā'*, p. 126.

adjoining areas not only by these trader-preachers but by the Sufis as well, who had migrated and settled in these settlements. Historical evidence proves the presence of Sufi dwellings or lodges in the Muslim settlements in these coastal regions.¹⁵ It shows that many Sufis settled in areas where the Muslim armies had not yet penetrated. The earliest known Sufi to migrate and settle in India is said to be a scholar of *ḥadīth* named Abū Ḥafṣ Rabi' ibn Ṣabīḥ al-'Ādī al-Baṣrī (d. 106 AH/724 AD), who came to Sindh.¹⁶

The ensuing centuries witnessed more pouring in of Sufis in India,¹⁷ which was accelerated in the wake of the Ghaznavid conquest and annexation of the Punjab, Multan and some parts of Sindh in the early eleventh century. There is evidence that by the middle of eleventh century Sufism had fully penetrated into these areas as a number of Sufis had poured in. Under the Ghaznavid rule, the city of Lahore had become a great centre of Sufi activities.

One of the earliest Sufi-preachers to migrate to Lahore was Shaykh Ismā'īl,¹⁸ a scholar of *tasfīr* (exegesis of Quran), *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*, who settled there in 1005 A.D. Then came Shaykh Abū 'I-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Uthmān ibn 'Alī al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, popularly known as *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh*, who settled in Lahore, where he died and was buried as well. He was the author of a famous Persian treatise on Sufism titled *Kashf al-Mahjūb*. Other migrant Sufis of that era who settled in Lahore include, *inter alia*, Sa'īyid

¹⁵ See details in Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁶ Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 46.

¹⁷ Valī al-Dīn informs that the Khyber Pass proved to be the main entrance for the Sufis and *darvēshes*. Mir Valiuddin, "Sufi Movement in India", in *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*, ed. Syed Abdul Latif (Hyderabad: The Institute of Indo-Middle East Cultural Studies, 1958), p. 225.

¹⁸ For a brief biographical note, see Mawlawī Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, vol. II (Lucknow: Newal Kishore, 1914), p. 230.

Aḥmad Tökhtah Tirmidhī,¹⁹ the father of four women Sufis referred to as Bībī Pāk Dāmanān (literally meaning the chaste women) buried in Lahore, Saiyyid Ya‘qūb Zanjānī alias Ṣadr Dīwān (d. 1235),²⁰ Shaykh ‘Azīz al-Dīn al-Makkī²¹ and Saiyyid Abī Ghiffār Ḥusaynī, popularly known as Saiyyid Mithā.²² Another important Sufi of the Punjab was Saiyyid Aḥmad, popularly known as Sulṭān Sakhī Sarwar, who settled near Wazīrābād, and later went to Dhōṅkal.²³ A renowned Sufi Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn Kāzīrūnī (d. 1035)²⁴ had settled in Uch in Bahawalpur, while another Sufi named Shāh Yūsuf Gardayzī (d. 1152) is said to have settled in Multan.²⁵

When the Sufis migrated from various regions of the Muslim lands to north India in the early eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth century, Sufism as a movement had almost passed its formative phase in Western and Central Asia, Iraq and Persia. But at that time Sufism had not yet developed a relatively organized form or marked congregational features. The early Sufis in India, like their counterparts in other regions of the Muslim world, had not organized themselves in *silsilahs*. In other words, the *silsilahs* or *ṭarīqahs* had not yet crystallized.

¹⁹ For a brief note, see *ibid.*, pp. 251-52.

²⁰ For a brief note, see *ibid.*, pp. 252-53.

²¹ For a brief note, see *ibid.*, pp. 255-56.

²² For a brief note, see *ibid.*, pp. 275-76.

²³ For a brief note, see *ibid.*, pp. 245-48, and Ikrām, *Āb-i Kauthar*, pp. 91-96. See also S. Moinul Haq, "Early Sufi Shaykhs of the Subcontinent", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXII, part I (January 1974), pp. 14-15.

²⁴ Saiyyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1986), pp. 110-11. However, Ikrām maintains that he was born in 962 and he died in 1007 A.D. *Idem*, *Āb-i Kauthar*, pp. 81-82.

²⁵ Ikrām, *Āb-i Kauthar*, p. 83.

The thirteenth century witnessed the Mongol invasions in Central and West Asia, Iraq and Persia, which spurred fresh waves of migrants, including Sufis and scholars, in two diametrically opposite directions: one towards India in the south-east, as the Delhi Sultanate was considered to be safe from the Mongol invasions, and the other towards Anatolia in the north-west. The arrival of a large number of Sufis in India gave considerable impetus to the popularity of Sufism in the Indian society. The thirteenth century Indian society presents a mosaic of diverse religious traditions informed by Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, though the society was predominantly Hindu by faith, Buddhism had started declining long ago, whereas the presence of the adherents of Jainism was quite minimal. The people, including both the Muslims and the Hindus, were more attracted to the Sufis as compared to the upholders of *Sharī‘ah*, and the formal legalistic version of Islam, generally associated with the *‘ulamā’*. In such a predominantly Hindu environment, these Sufis acquired an aura of holiness. Probably for this reason, Indian Islam has been termed as a ‘holy-man Islam’ by Trimmingham. According to him, the Sufi *khānqāhs* were the “focal points of Islam—centres of holiness, fervour, ascetic exercises, and Sufi training. Contrary to the Arab-world institutions... the Indian *khanāqahs* grew up around a holy man and became associated with his *ṭarīqa* and method of discipline and exercises.”²⁶

From the first quarter of the thirteenth century onwards, Sufism in India underwent an organizational change. As in Persia, Iraq and Western and Central Asia where the Sufi *silsilahs* had begun to be differentiated, the growth of Sufism in the thirteenth century India was closely tied to the systematization of *silsilahs*. In the first

²⁶ Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 22.

quarter of the thirteenth century, two *silsilahs*—the Chishtiyyah and Suhrawardiyyah—were introduced in India, whereas other *silsilahs* such as Qādiriyyah, Shaṭṭāriyyah and Naqshbandiyyah were brought in later in the ensuing centuries.

The Chishtī *Silsilah* made its most enduring impact upon India. Though an early Chishtī Sufi Khwājah Abū Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (d. 1020) was the first Sufi of the *Silsilah*, who visited India in the reign of Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghaznah,²⁷ he could not achieve considerable success in preaching Islam and spreading the teachings of his *Silsilah* in India. The Chishtī *Silsilah* was again introduced in India towards the close of the twelfth century by Khwājah Mu‘in al-Dīn Chishtī (d. 1236), popularly known as Khwājah Gharīb Nawāz, who successfully laid its foundations and made it popular in India.²⁸ According to Ḥāmid ibn Faḍl Allāh Jamālī (d. 1536), he was born in Sijistān, and was the son of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ḥasan.²⁹ After his encounter with a *majdhūb* named Ibrāhīm Qandūzī, he distributed his property and possessions among the poor and *darvēshes*, and set out on his travels. In Hārwan, a town near Nīshāpur, he met Khwājah ‘Uthmān Hārwanī,³⁰ and performed *bay‘at* at his hands, and became his disciple. He lived in the company of his preceptor for almost two and a half years, and undertook spiritual exercises under the supervision of Khwājah ‘Uthmān, who eventually bestowed his

²⁷ Nizāmī, *Tārīkh-i Mashā’ikh-i Chisht*, vol. 1, pp. 197, 198.

²⁸ However, some have argued that it seems that it was due to the writings of Amīr Khūrd and Shaykh Jamālī that the Khwājah’s fame as a Sufi Shaykh spread far and wide from Akbar’s time onwards. As for his preaching of Islam, there does not appear to be any reliable evidence of it. Moreover, the Chishtī *Silsilah* did not spread through his efforts, as he remained in Ajmer. It spread through the efforts of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, Bābā Farīd and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’. Muhammad Salim, “A Reappraisal of the Sources on Shaykh Mu‘in al-Dīn Ajmerī”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XVI, part II and III (April-July 1968), pp. 151-52.

²⁹ Shaykh Ḥāmid ibn Faḍl Allāh Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, (comp. between 1531-35 A.D.) (Delhi: Rizvi Press, 1311 A.H./1893 A.D.), p. 4.

³⁰ For a brief biographical note on Khwājah ‘Uthmān Hārwanī, see *Anwār-i Asfiyā*, pp. 141-43.

khirqah or patched cloak, a symbol of spiritual succession, on him.³¹ Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn again took to extensive traveling in Central and Western Asia, Iraq and Persia, and met a number of renowned Sufis and Shaykhs. He also visited India five times. In his final journey towards India, he decided to settle here. First he reached Multan, and then Lahore, from where he went to Delhi in 1191.³² He lived in Delhi for a few months, and then set out towards Rajasthan.³³ Finally, the Khwājah decided to settle at Ajmer in Rajasthan, after visiting different areas. He settled near the banks of Anā Sāgar, a lake adjacent to the city.

Here one must not assume that the Khwājah left Delhi since it was a city of political significance, and he chose Ajmer, which was a remote town in Rajputana. In fact, at that time Delhi was still a comparatively unimportant city, whereas Ajmer was a prominent religious center of the Hindus, and considered to be the heart of Hinduism. Politically and strategically, it was the capital of Prithvīrāj Chauhān (Rā‘ē Pithūrā), the ruler of Ajmer, who was one of the most powerful rulers of the Rajput dynasties. Thus, the Khwājah was “not positioning himself in a remote backpost but right into the hot seat.”³⁴

Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn’s relations with the Hindu raja were not amiable. The raja was naturally troubled by the Khwājah’s presence in his capital, as his popularity was

³¹ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 4. Jamālī also informs that at the time of receiving *khirqah*, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn was fifty-two years of age. p. 6.

³² Zahurul Hassan Sharib, *Khawaja Gharib Nawaz* (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1991 rpt., first published 1961), pp. 24, 48-49.

³³ For detailed account of his traveling, see Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, pp. 4-12.

³⁴ Muneera Haeri, *The Chishtis: A Living Light* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 23.

constantly increasing and people were accepting Islam at his hands, which is reflected by the fact that one of the employees of the raja was a devotee of the Khwājah.³⁵ In 1192, the Ghaurid forces under the command of Sultan Muḥammad Ghaurī overran the region, the raja was defeated, and his rule was put to an end.³⁶ Therefore, it is wrong to assume that, apart from their settlements on coastal areas, the Muslims settled in various parts of Indian heartland in the wake of the Ghaurid conquests. Historical evidence suggests the presence of Muslims in various towns and cities of India, before these areas came under the sway of the Muslim rule.

Thus, it was after the arrival of the Khwājah in Delhi that it was captured by the Muslim forces in 1193-94 under the command of Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg, who was a Turkish slave general of Sultan Muḥammad Ghaurī. After Delhi, many other areas including Ajmer were conquered by the Muslim forces. After wresting the control of Ajmer from the Chauhān rulers, Aybeg appointed Mīr Saiyyid Ḥusayn Mashhadī alias *Khing-sawār* (literally meaning a horse rider) as *faujdār* (military governor) in Ajmer, who was also made responsible for maintaining peace in the region. In Ajmer, Mīr Saiyyid Ḥusayn met Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn, and became his devotee. However, when the news of Aybeg’s sudden death in 1210 reached Ajmer, the local population rebelled against the Muslim rule, and the Saiyyid was attacked and killed.³⁷ He was buried in Ajmer on a nearby hill-

³⁵ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 46.

³⁶ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 9-11.

³⁷ Sarwar, *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā’*, vol. II, pp. 254-55. However, according to another account, Mīr Saiyyid Ḥusayn accompanied the Khwājah to Ajmer, where the former was appointed as a *faujdār*. The Saiyyid had become a disciple of the Khwājah. Later, he was killed by the Hindus. Muḥammad Ghauthī Shaṭṭārī Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, (Garden of the Pious), (comp. in 1014 A.H.), Urdu trans. Faḍl Aḥmad Jūrī, *Adhkār-i Abrār* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1395 A.H.), pp. 29, 35. Henceforth referred to as *Gulzār-i Abrār*. According to another account, the Khwājah had already

top. So after coming under the sway of the Muslim rule, Ajmer became a frontier fortress of Muslim power. The annexation of Ajmer was necessary to hold in check the powerful Chauhān rulers, who had controlled Delhi before the defeat of Prithvīrāj in 1192 in the famous battlefield of Tarā'in by Sultan Muḥammad Ghaurī.

In the thirteenth century Rajasthan, there were large size landholdings³⁸ when Khwājah Mu'in al-Dīn settled in Ajmer. In this way, the socio-economic set up of the region stood in sharp contrast to the personal life of the Khwājah, which was characterized by austerity, renunciation and simplicity. He had a small piece of land near Ajmer, which he and his family used to cultivate for their livelihood.³⁹ The social conditions of the then Ajmer reveal the caste distinctions in the Hindu society, which were broken by the Khwājah. The ideal of equality of all human beings irrespective of caste, creed and colour, which the Khwājah propagated, attracted a large following from among the Hindus and also won conversions to Islam in the region.⁴⁰ As indicated above, he accepted an employee of the Hindu raja in his discipleship, who must have converted to Islam before entering the fold of Sufism. Moreover, one of the two wives of Khwājah

settled in Ajmer when the Saiyyid reached there. Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, (comp. between 1045-65 A.H. circa), vol. II, Urdu trans. Captain Wāḥid Bakhsh Siyāl (Lahore: Sufi Foundation, 1982), p. 115. Another account informs that when the Khwājah came to Ajmer, the Sufi-warrior, Mīr Saiyyid Ḥusayn, had already been killed, and the Khwājah was told that he was buried there on a nearby hill-top. Allāh Diyā Chishtī, *Siyar al-Aqtāb*, (comp. in 1647), (Lucknow: Newal Kishore, 1877), p. 125.

³⁸ V. C. Misra, *Geography of Rajasthan* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1967), p. 66.

³⁹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 53.

⁴⁰ However, it would be erroneous to assume that the Khwājah was only a proselytizer of Islam or a missionary in the Christian sense. Though his presence in Ajmer encouraged conversion to Islam among the Hindus, it was, in the words of Haeri, only a 'by-product' of his mission, as the Khwājah would not have regarded himself as one specifically destined to bring the Hindus into the fold of Islam. Idem, *The Chishtis: A Living Light*, pp. 19, 20.

Mu'in al-Din is said to be the daughter of a Hindu raja,⁴¹ with whom he must have married after the fall of the Chauhān Kingdom by the Muslim forces. This marriage must have served as a bridge between the Muslim migrants and the local populace.

The principal successor of Khwājah Mu'in al-Din Chishtī was Shaykh Quṭb al-Din Bakhtiyār Kākī (d. 1235), whose principal successor was Shaykh Farīd al-Din Mas'ūd, popularly known as Bābā Farīd (d.1265). Shaykh Niẓām al-Din Awliyā' (d.1325) in turn succeeded Bābā Farīd, and appointed Shaykh Naṣīr al-Din Maḥmūd *Chirāgh-i Dehlī* (d. 1356) as his principal successor. The *khirqah*, a symbol of spiritual succession, and other regalia of the Chishtī Shaykhs then reached Saiyyid Bandahnawāz Gēsūdirāz (d. 1422).

Currie lists nine principles that governed the lives of the early Chishtīs in India as such:⁴²

1. Obedience of the *murīd* or disciple to the *murshid* or preceptor
2. Renunciation of the concerns of the material world
3. Independence from the state
4. Approval of *samā'*
5. Strenuous personal routine of prayers and devotions
6. Dependence on either cultivation of waste-land, or unsolicited offerings
7. Disapproval of displays of miraculous powers

⁴¹ Khwājah Mu'in al-Din's wife, Bībī Amt-Allāh, was the daughter of a local Hindu raja. His another wife, Bībī 'Iṣmat, was the daughter of Saiyyid Wajih al-Din Muḥammad Mashhadī. Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, pp. 29, 31, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 43-44, and Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlavī, *Akhbār al-Akhyār fī Asrār al-Abrār*, (Reports of the Righteous on the Secrets of the Pious), (comp. in 1590), (Deoband: Kutubkhānah-'i Raḥimīyyah, n.d.), p. 120. Henceforth referred to as *Akhbār al-Akhyār*. See also Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arīfin*, p. 15.

⁴² Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'in al-din Chishtī of Ajmer*, p. 65; for details see pp. 89-94.

8. Service to others in the form of (a) teaching and guidance; (b) distribution of surplus food and wealth
9. Tolerance and respect for other religions.

Section II Early Chishtī Sufis: Carving out Space in the Delhi Sultanate

As indicated above, one of the chief principles of the Chishtī Sufis in India was their independence from the state. The early Chishtī Sufis of India were able to carve out a space for themselves independent of the state during the first three decades after the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi. These first three decades were marked by the consolidation of both the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi by their founding fathers, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn and Sultan Iletmish respectively. What follows is a description and analysis of how the traditions of the *Silsilah* evolved and were consolidated in India, and how the political authority of the Delhi Sultanate was strengthened. This is followed by a discussion on how the Chishtī Sufis in the said era carved out their independent space in the Sultanate.

3.3 Consolidation of the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1236)

Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn and Sultan Iletmish both died in the same year 1236. By the time of their death, the *Silsilah* and the Sultanate had become firmly rooted in India. In fact, during the first three decades after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, the interests of the Chishtī Sufis and the Sultans of Delhi coincided. The Chishtī Sufis were busy in consolidating their *Silsilah* and working out its principles, including independence from the state and political authorities, whereas Sultan Iletmish was preoccupied with

strengthening his political authority and consolidating his rule. In this period, the relationship between the Chishtī Sufīs and the Sultans of Delhi was one of mutual respect.

The Chishtī *Silsilah* was consolidated by Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn and his disciples, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Suwālī (d. 1274), in northern India. When the Khwājah died in 1236, his *Silsilah* had proliferated to various regions including the cities of Ajmer, Delhi, Nāgaur (Rajputana), Hānsī (District Ḥiṣār, Punjab) and Ajōdhan, later renamed Pakpattan, (Punjab). The early Chishtīs in India worked out the following principles and continued the traditions of their *Silsilah* in order to consolidate it:

First, the early Chishtīs in India gave up mendicancy in favour of sedentary lifestyle. While investigating the Central Asian influence on the early Chishtīs in India, Thierry Zarcone, a French scholar of Sufism, has pointed out that it was under the influence of the Central Asian Sufī group of *qalandars* that Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn and Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī had adopted the erratic lifestyle of the *darvēshes*. Inspired by the Malāmatiyyah-Qalandariyyah practices, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn traveled extensively all over the Muslim world before he reached Ajmer, and eventually decided to settle there. Similarly, Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, who was born in the city of Ush (presently situated in Kirghizistan, Central Asia), had reached Multan as a wandering *darvēsh*, and it was only around 1228 that he eventually settled in Delhi.⁴³ Thus, the early Chishtīs,

⁴³ Thierry Zarcone, "Central Asian Influence on the Early Development of the Chishtiyya Sufi Order in India" in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture*, eds. Alam, Delvoye and Gaborieau, pp. 100-1.

who had migrated to India, gave up their wandering lifestyle, and permanently settled at various places. The subsequent development of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India largely depended upon the settling down of these early Indian Chishtī Sufis.

Secondly, after settling at Ajmer and Delhi, the early Chishtīs established their *khānqāhs*, generally referred to as *jamā' atkhānahs*, which became a centre of attraction for the Muslim and Hindu population alike. These places were the main centres of activities associated with the Chishtī *Silsilah* such as *samā'* accompanied by ecstatic dance or *raqs*. The inmates of the *khānqāhs*, including the disciples of the Sufī Shaykhs, lived a communal life in them, where the Shaykh vigilantly directed them. Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn had established his *khānqāh* in Ajmer, whereas Quṭb al-Dīn had his *khānqāh* at Delhi.⁴⁴ The *khānqāh* system developed further under Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd in Ajōdhan and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' in Delhi.⁴⁵ In the words of Nizami: "Though within the political confines of the Sultanate of Delhi, the *Jamaat Khanahs* of the early Chishtī saints of India did not form a part of the Delhi Empire. They were a world of their own."⁴⁶ In fact, there was a classless atmosphere in the Chishtī *khānqāhs* which stood as bastions of equality in the then Indian society. Young and old, rich and poor, righteous and evil-doers, in short, people belonging to any age, status, caste, creed and colour, who flocked to these *khānqāhs*, were treated alike. Their doors were open to all and sundry, and no discrimination was directed towards them. The

⁴⁴ However, in the early days of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, there was no tradition of open kitchen (*langar*) in the *khānqāh*. According to Nizami, the tradition was probably established by Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn (Bābā Farīd) in Ajōdhan, which subsequently became an integral part of *khānqāh* life in India. Idem, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 205, n.7.

⁴⁵ For details of the organization and division of labour at the Chishtī *khānqāhs*, see *ibid.*, pp. 205-14.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

khānqāhs had an environment where much stress was laid on equality, fraternity and simplicity in contrast to the then mores of the ruling elite, which were characterized by racial and ethnic discrimination, extravagance and external pomp and show. Moreover, these *khānqāhs* were the places where people with non-conformist behaviour could live or be associated with without fear. These non-conformists included, *inter alia*, the *qalandars* and *mazjūbs*, as well as the advocates of controversial Sufi practices and doctrines like *samāʿ* and *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* (the Oneness of Being)⁴⁷ articulated by Ibn al-ʿArabī. In the less tolerant political climate of the Delhi Sultanate, these *khānqāhs* provided a breathing space to individuals who had an inclination towards non-conformism in beliefs and practices. In the words of Hugh Tinker, “Sufism created a climate of opinion in which unorthodoxy could be heard without instant persecution.”⁴⁸ In a nutshell, on one hand, the Chishtī Sufis distanced themselves from the state, the kings and the ruling elite, but on the other hand, they established a direct personal contact with the masses through these *khānqāhs*.

Thirdly, the practice of granting of *khirqah* or a patched cloak or robe to the *khulafāʾ* or spiritual successors was carried on for the continuation of the Sufi tradition of imparting spiritual guidance to the initiates. A number of *khulafāʾ* were appointed, and were dispatched to different regions to propagate the doctrines and teachings of Sufism in general and their *Silsilah* in particular. One among them was recognized as the chief *khalifah* of the Shaykh. Before his arrival in India, Khwājah Muʿīn al-Dīn had appointed

⁴⁷ The philosophy of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* (the Oneness of Being, or Pantheistic Monism), attributed to Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī, was disseminated in India in the late fourteenth century. For some discussion, see chap. 6, notes 56 and 57 (infra).

⁴⁸ Hugh Tinker, *South Asia: A Short History* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1966), p. 85.

his *khulafā'* or deputies in various regions, such as Muḥammad Yādgār in Ḥiṣār Shādmān and Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Ḥakīm in Balkh.⁴⁹ In India, he continued this practice. His most prominent and chief *khalīfah* was Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, who was granted the *khirqah* and sent to Delhi as his deputy or representative.⁵⁰ However, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn expired in 1235 during the lifetime of his preceptor. His most prominent *khalīfah* and principal successor was Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd (Bābā Farīd), who was elevated to the position of *khalīfah* by Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn in Delhi, but was granted the *khirqah* after the death of his preceptor.⁵¹ Before his demise, Bābā Farīd ordered to give his *khirqah* to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn,⁵² who in turn granted it to his principal successor, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd.⁵³ The articles of spiritual regalia such as the *khirqah*, as well as the *muṣalla* (a prayer-mat), *kullāh* (a turban or cap), 'aṣā' (a staff) and wooden sandals of a Shaykh symbolized spiritual succession.

⁴⁹ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 8-11.

⁵⁰ Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, *Dalīl al-'Ārifīn* (the *malḥūz* of Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī, comp. Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī) in *Hasht Bahisht (Majmū'a-'i Malḥūzāt-i Khwājān-i Chisht Ahl-i Bahisht)*, Urdu trans. (Lahore: Allāh Wālē kī Qawmī Dukān, n.d.), p. 53. As the name of the book (*Hasht Bahisht*) indicates, it contains the translation of eight Chishtī *malḥūzāt*, bound together in one volume. The name of the translator has not been mentioned. This book has been reprinted from Lahore: Progressive Books, 1996, which is almost a duplication of the earlier print, with some additional biographical sketches of the Chishtī Sufis. However, the translator's name, Anṣar Šābirī, has been mentioned, who has also contributed biographical sketches on the Chishtī Shaykhs to it. For a critical appraisal of the authenticity of the *malḥūz*, see note 73 in this chap. (*infra*). The book *Hasht Bahisht* is not to be confused with another work bearing the same title. Mulla 'Abd al-Ḥakīm 'Atā' Tatvī, *Hasht Bahisht* 1085-1118 A.H. (Hyderabad: Sindhī Adabī Board, 1963.)

⁵¹ Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn passed away when Bābā Farīd was in Hānsī. When the latter reached Delhi soon after the demise of his preceptor, he was granted the Shaykh's *khirqah* along with other regalia such as prayer mat, staff and wooden sandals by Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī. Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 29, and Badr al-Dīn Ishāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā'*, (*malḥūz* of Bābā Farīd) in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 91. Though *Asrār al-Awliyā'*, which comprises of the discourses in twenty-two *majālis* (gatherings or assemblies; sing. *majlis*) of Bābā Farīd, is generally considered to be an apocryphal work, the cited information is corroborated by other sources as well.

⁵² Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 58.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

Fourthly, the Chishtī *Silsilah* is considered to be the ‘largest and most popular’⁵⁴, the ‘most influential’⁵⁵ and ‘the most Indianized’⁵⁶ of all the Sufi *silsilahs* in India. One of the major causes of its widespread appeal and popularity was its ‘Indianization’, which began with the introduction of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India.⁵⁷ While retaining fidelity to the teachings of Islam, the Chishtī Shaykhs incorporated some of the elements from the Hindu culture. The ruling elite of the Sultanate were predominantly Turks, Tajiks, Persians and Afghans, and their cultural expressions and patterns were Turco-Persian. Though almost all of the Sultans of Delhi were born in India, they made no systematic attempt to bring about cultural assimilation of the royalty and ruling elite, and the Indian masses. It was the Sufis, and more notably, the Chishtī Sufis, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, who shouldered the task of cultural assimilation of the migrants and indigenous folk, and thereby bridged the yawning gulf between the rulers and the ruled by their contribution in the realm of language and culture. In this regard, the contribution of the Sufis in evolving a common medium of communication in a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-ethnic society cannot be overstated. While examining the role of Sufis in the development of Urdu language, Mawlawī ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq (popularly known as *Bābā-i Urdu*) argues that most of the Sufis of India were acquainted with the local dialects, and

⁵⁴ Hardy, “Part IV: Islam in Medieval India”, in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, ed. Embree, p. 450. Buehler also considers the Chishtīyah as ‘the most popular’ Sufi *Silsilah* in the Indian Subcontinent. Idem, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, p. 225, n. Similarly, Ernst and Lawrence also considers the Chishtīyah as ‘the largest and the most important’ *Silsilah* in India in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Idem, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 36.

⁵⁵ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 351.

⁵⁶ Liebeskind, *Piety on its Knees*, p. 125.

⁵⁷ Qādī Jāvēd points out that Bābā Farīd represents a kind of Sufism which can be termed as ‘*Hindī Muslim taṣawwuf*’. Idem, *Barr-i Ṣaghīr mēñ Muslim Fikr kā Irtiqā’* (Lahore: Idārah-’i Thaqāfat-i Pākistān, 1977), p. 26.

they freely used them,⁵⁸ in contrast to the ruling elite, who had deliberately impeded the process of cultural assimilation and integration by maintaining a distance from the people. It is recorded that Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn had learnt *Hindustānī* language in Multan, and it was only after getting acquainted with the indigenous medium of communication, that he settled in Ajmer.⁵⁹ Similarly, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn’s disciple Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī and his family members, who lived in a remote town of Suwāl in Nāgaur, used to converse in *Hindavī* language.⁶⁰ According to Amīr Khūrd, Bābā Farīd could speak the local language.⁶¹ The Chishtīs played a significant role in the development of *Hindavī* language and literature during the times of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’, whose two eminent disciples, Amīr Khusrau (d. 1325) and Amīr Ḥasan ‘Alā’ Sijzī (d. 1328) in particular, contributed to the development of *Hindavī* language and literature. Amīr Ḥasan composed *ghazals* (love songs) in *Hindavī* language, whereas Amīr Khusrau wrote *Hindavī* couplets and riddles, and also mixed Hindī and Persian poems.⁶² Similarly, two Chishtī Sufis, Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb (d. 1443), a renowned *khalīfah* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, and Saiyyid Bandahnawāz Gēsūdirāz, introduced and popularized the *Hindavī* language in the Deccan. Gēsūdirāz’s work, *Mi‘rāj al-‘Ashiqīn* (The Zenith of [Divine] Lovers), is considered to be the first prose

⁵⁸ Mawlawī ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Urdū kī Ibtidā’i Nashōnumā mēn Ṣūfiyā’ē Karām kā Kām*, (The Contribution of Sufis in the Early Development of Urdu Language) (Karachi: Anjuman Taraqqī-’i Urdu Pākistān, 1986 rpt.), passim. For the role of the eminent Chishtī Sufis of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the development of Urdu, see pp. 9-25.

⁵⁹ S. M. Ikrām, “*Khwāja-’i Khwājgān*”, Karachi (1972), p. 99, as cited in Muḥammad Aslam, *Malfūzātū Adab kī Tārīkhī Ahammiyyat* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 1995), p. 339.

⁶⁰ Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Maḥmūd, *Surūr al-Ṣudūr*, MS, Mawlānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh, *Fārsī Taṣawwuf*, no. 21/161, f. 8.

⁶¹ Bābā Farīd is recorded to have uttered a sentence in Urdu: “*Pōnūñ kā chānd bhī bālā hotā haē*” (the crescent is also small). Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 183.

⁶² Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 103. For details, see K. A. Niẓāmī, *Tārīkhī Maqālāt* (Delhi: Delhi: Nadwat al-Muṣannifin, 1966), pp. 45-78.

work in *Hindavī* language. In addition, he also learnt Sanskrit language, and was well-acquainted with the Hindu mythology as well.⁶³ Highlighting the linguistic and phonetic features of *Hindavī* used by the Sufis, Yusuf Husain maintains that “the metres used by them are mostly Hindi, and occasionally Persian. The rhyming of all words, whether of Hindi or Arab or Persian origin, is based on their similarity of sound, as they are pronounced by the inhabitants of this country.”⁶⁴ It is important to note that the Chishtī Sufis used *Hindavī* language for the purpose of preaching as well. It seems that from the very beginning, it was a definite policy of the Sufis to employ the *Hindavī* language for preaching.⁶⁵ They realized that they could not reach the common people through Persian language, which was the language of the court, or the official language in the Sultanate. They found *Hindavī* to be the most suitable medium for communication and preaching among the local population. Similarly, as Eaton has shown, the Sufi folk literature provided a vital link between Hindus and Muslims, since the abstract Sufi doctrines were translated in easily comprehensible and appealing form through this literature, which became popular among the illiterate Hindus and Muslims alike.⁶⁶

⁶³ Saiyyid Muḥammad Akbar Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim*, (*maḥfūzāt* of Saiyyid Bandahnawāz Gēsūdīrāz) ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid Ṣiddīqī (Kanpur: Intazāmī Press, 1356 A.H./1937 A.D.), p. 119.

⁶⁴ Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, p. 108.

⁶⁵ A similar observation about the Sufis' role in Bengal seems worth-citing here: according to Asim Roy, the Sufis of Bengal were able to “break the religio-cultural domination of the orthodox, who, by virtue of their cultural orientation and elitist approach, had not allowed the local Bengali language to become the vehicle for the dissemination and diffusion of Islam—without realizing that their use of a foreign medium was thwarting the spread of the religion in Bengal.” Idem, “The *Pir* Tradition: A Case Study in Islamic Syncretism in Traditional Bengal” in *Images of Man: Religious and Historical Process in South Asia*, ed. Fred W. Clothey (Madras: New Era Publications, 1982), as cited in A. R. Saiyed, “Saints and *Dargahs* in the Indian Subcontinent: A Review”, in *Muslim Shrines in India*, ed. Troll, p. 251.

⁶⁶ Richard M. Eaton, *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), see chap. 8, “Sufi Folk Literature and the Expansion of Indian Islam”, pp. 189-99.

Fifthly, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn and his disciples also worked out other principles of the *Silsilah* at Ajmer such as independence from the state, approval of *samā‘*, strenuous personal routine of prayers and devotions, dependence on either cultivation of waste-land or unsolicited offerings (*futūḥ*),⁶⁷ humanism, tolerance and respect for all religions. These factors also contributed to the popularity of Chishtīs in India. The Chishtī Sufis were considered to be the epitome of love, affection and peace, which earned them immense admiration as well as devotion from the people of all religions alike. They won popular appeal, as a large number of people flocked their *khānqāhs*. The Chishtī Sufis were particularly known for their tolerance towards the Hindus. Various hagiographical accounts inform that they held debates and discourses with the Hindu ascetics, *yōgīs* and *pandits*, but generally avoided indulging in controversies with them.⁶⁸ Buehler observes that the Chishtī Sufis “skillfully mediated local Indian culture and Islamic practice.... Chishtī popularity among common people, Muslim and non-Muslim demonstrates the ability of their *pirs* to operate on the boundary between Muslim and non-Muslim...”⁶⁹ In addition, the Chishtī Sufis earned immense popularity among the people owing to their practice of *samā‘*, which attracted wide attention and appeal, although it was disapproved of by some of the ‘*ulamā‘*. Since the rites and rituals of Hinduism included the use of music for devotional purposes, the Chishtī practice of *samā‘* helped bring the adherents of the Hindu faith closer to the circle of the Chishtī

⁶⁷ It is important to note that the Chishtī Shaykhs (as distinct from ordinary disciples) were allowed only these two means of earning livelihood. For a detailed study on the *futūḥ* system in South Asia, see Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, chap. 3, pp. 87-150. For a general discussion on the views of the Sufis regarding earning of livelihood, see Moḥammad Mahmood ‘Ali Quṭbī, “The Early Sufis and Earning of Livelihood”, *Studies in Islam*, vol. XVIII, no. 1-2 (Jan-Apr, 1981), pp. 1-8.

⁶⁸ For instance, see Bābā Farīd’s conversation with a Hindu *yōgī* in Sijzī, *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*, p. 144.

⁶⁹ Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, p. 225, n.

Sufis.⁷⁰ The popularity of *samāʿ* in India has been regarded as a success indicator of the Chishtīs by some scholars. Bruce Lawrence observes, for instance: “It is a signpost of the Chishtīs’ success that among Indian Muslims the wholesale rejection of *samāʿ* was not voiced—either as a theoretical desideratum or a practical requirement—till the advent of the Mujaddidi branch of the Naqshbandiyya in the late 16th and early 17th century.”⁷¹ In a nutshell, these traditions of the Chishtī *Silsilah* were continued by the *khulafāʾ* of Khwājah Muʿīn al-Dīn and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn in the ensuing decades.

Sixthly and lastly, Sufi literature was produced in the Chishtī circles during these early decades, which may be taken to be an effort to preserve the record of the traditions of the *Silsilah* as well as serve as a means of propagating its teachings and doctrines among the people, and consolidating the *Silsilah*. This literature includes *malḥūz* (pl. *malḥūzāt*), i.e. the conversations/table talks, or the informal discourses of the Sufi Shaykhs recorded by their disciples. *Anīs al-Arwāḥ* is said to be the *malḥūz* of Shaykh ʿUthmān Hārwanī collected by Khwājah Muʿīn al-Dīn Chishtī,⁷² and *Dalīl al-ʿĀrifīn* is believed to be the *malḥūz* of Khwājah Muʿīn al-Dīn compiled by Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī.⁷³ In addition, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn is also reported to have compiled the

⁷⁰ Haeri, *The Chishtis: A Living Light*, pp. 32-33.

⁷¹ Bruce B. Lawrence, “The Early Chishtī Approach to *Samāʿ*”, in *Islamic Society and Culture: Essays in the Honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad*, ed. Milton Israel and N. K. Wagle (New Delhi: Manohar, 1983), p. 90.

⁷² The work seems to be apocryphal, as Shaykh ʿUthmān Hārwanī, who died in 1211, is allegedly reported to have ‘directly heard from’ Khwājah Abū Yūsuf Chishtī (d. 1067) and Khwājah Abū Muḥammad Chishtī (d. 1020), in addition to his preceptor Ḥājī Sharīf Zandanī and his preceptor, Khwājah Mawdūd Chishtī (d. 1126). For instance, see Muʿīn al-Dīn Chishtī, *Anīs al-Arwāḥ* in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 5-7, 12, 24, 29 and 36. *Anīs al-Arwāḥ* comprises the sayings of Khwājah ʿUthmān as recorded in twenty-eight different *majālis*.

⁷³ *Dalīl al-ʿĀrifīn* comprises the conversations of the Khwājah as recorded in twelve different *majālis*. However, from a number of citations in it, it seems to be an apocryphal *malḥūz* attributed to the Khwājah, or seems to be distorted later. For instance, from the opening sentence of the work, it seems

sayings of his eight Chishtī predecessors with the title *Hasht Bahisht* (Eight Paradises).⁷⁴ Similarly, a *malfūz* of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī is reported to be compiled by Bābā Farīd with the title *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn*.⁷⁵ A *malfūz* of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī titled *Surūr al-Ṣudūr* was compiled by Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the paternal grandson of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī,⁷⁶ which is considered genuine by even those historians, who have rejected the above-mentioned *malfūzāt*.⁷⁷ In addition to these

as if the work has been compiled not by Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, but rather by one of his disciples. Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, *Dalīl al-Ārifīn* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 1. (However, in 1996 edition, the sentence has partly been deleted, and thus, the statement seems to be 'corrected'.) Similarly, once when Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd fell ill, he sent his *wazīr* to Khwājah Fuḍayl ibn 'Ayāḍ to inform him. The Khwājah immediately came to see him, and the Caliph was recovered by a spiritual remedy (*damm*, literally meaning to blow one's breath). pp. 26-27. The incident is contradicted by the details of the biography of Khwājah Fuḍayl, as recorded in *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'* by 'Aṭṭār, mentioned earlier in chapter one.

⁷⁴ Trimingham does not doubt the authenticity of the work, as he observes that the compilation was "most important in giving a distinctive line to the doctrinal outlook of the order." Idem, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 64, n. The work is not to be confused with the translation of eight *malfūzāt* of Chishtī Sufis in one book bearing the same title mentioned above.

⁷⁵ Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd (Bābā Farīd), *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn* in *Hasht Bahisht*. Though the work is considered to be apocryphal by many historians and scholars of Sufism, Nizami maintains that the work is "apocryphal but as it is an early fabrication it embodies the current traditions and stories about Iluttmish." Idem, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 115, n.2, and K. A. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture* (Allahabad: Kitāb Maḥal, 1966), p. 18, n.17. It is astonishing to note that in this *malfūz*, in one of the *majālis*, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn himself narrated the incident when he attended a *samā'* gathering and upon hearing the following verse of Shaykh Aḥmad Jām (d. 1141),

kushtagān-i khanjar-i taslīm rā
har zamān az ghayb jān-i dīgar ast
 The victims of the dagger of submission
 get a new life at every moment from the unseen world

he fell into ecstasy for seven days. For details, see p. 14. According to many other sources including *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, the Shaykh had died after remaining seven days in ecstasy after hearing the same verse in a *samā'* gathering. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 246-47. Therefore, the *malfūz* clearly seems to be a later day fabrication attributed to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn and Bābā Farīd as its compiler.

⁷⁶ However, Tafhimi argues that the work was compiled by one of the sons of Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī, because it contained the sayings and discourses of Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī as well. Sajidullah Tafhimi, "Shaykh Diyā al-Dīn Nakhshabi: His Life and Works, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXXI, part IV (October 1983), p. 261, n.2.

⁷⁷ Historians like Habib, K. A. Nizami and Muḥammad Aslam have accepted it as genuine. Nizami quotes Habib's remarks about it: "The work is genuine and not a fabrication of later days. It will be criminal to allow a work like this to perish and it will certainly perish if not printed." K. A. Nizami, "The Saroor-us-Sadur, A Fourteenth Century *Malfuz*", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Nagpur Session (Nagpur: University of Nagpur, 1950), p. 167. Reprinted in Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, pp. 97-101; reprinted (rev.) under the title "*Sarur-u's-Sudur*, a

malfūzāt, other works have also been attributed to the early Indian Chishtī Sufis. Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn is said to have written a treatise titled *Ganj al-Asrār* (The Treasure of Secrets) at the behest of his preceptor, Khwājah ‘Uthmān Hārwanī, for the guidance of Sultan Iletmish. The treatise is said to be based on Quranic injunctions and the sayings and teachings of the Prophet (PBUH). It also contained some sayings of the Sufis and their elaboration.⁷⁸ Moreover, the Khwājah is said to have written seven letters to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn on various themes pertaining to Sufism.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, there are different views regarding the authenticity of these and many other such works: some believe them to be genuine, whereas others consider them to be latter-day fabrications. For instance, Saiyyid Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān,⁸⁰

malfūz of Shaikh Hamid-u-d-din of Nagaur” in Nizami, *On Sources and Source Material*, pp. 63-68. However, Nizami writes that its compiler, Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Maḥmūd, was the son and successor of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī, whereas according to Aslam, the compiler was the paternal grandson of the Shaykh, as indicated from the *malfūz* itself. For a brief discussion on various opinions regarding the compiler, see Aslam, *Malfūzātī Adab kī Tārīkhī Ahammiyyat*, p. 75.

⁷⁸ The authenticity of the work, also referred to as *Kanz al-Asrār*, has not been challenged by biographers of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn such as Sharib. Idem, *Khawaja Gharib Nawaz*, pp. 102-3. However, according to Nizami, the work attributed to the Khwājah is fabricated. Nizami has argued that first, according to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’ and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn *Chirāgh-i Dehlī*, no Chishtī Sufi ever wrote a book; secondly, the statement that Shaykh ‘Uthmān Hārwanī visited India lacks contemporary confirmation; and thirdly, it is stated in *Ganj al-Asrār* that as a result of the influence of the Shaykh, the Sultan abstained from military activities for three years, but in the political career of Iletmish, there was no such period of inaction. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, pp. 34-36, and K. A. Niẓāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujḥānāt* (The Religious Orientation of the Sultans of Delhi) (Delhi: Nadwat al-Muṣannifin, 1958), pp. 124-27. It may be added here that Khwājah ‘Uthmān Hārwanī, who lived in Nishāpur, passed away in 1211, the same year when Sultan Iletmish ascended the throne of Delhi. So it seems improbable that Khwājah ‘Uthmān Hārwanī visited India and instructed Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn to write the treatise for the Sultan.

⁷⁹ These letters were written on the following themes: (i) On Divine Mysteries, (ii) On Nearness to God, (iii) On Renouncement, (iv) On Disappointment, (v) God shows the Way, (vi) Negation and Assertion, and (vii) The Perfect *Faqīr*. For details, see W. D. Begg, *The Holy Biography of Hazrat Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti—A Symbol of Love and Peace in India* (Tuscon, AZ: The Chishtī Sufi Mission of America, 1977), pp. 130-38.

⁸⁰ See Appendix on *Malfūzāt-i Khawājān-i Chisht* in Saiyyid Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Ṣūfiyah* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 1990 rpt., first published 1949), pp. 538-95.

'Allāmah Akhlāq Ḥusayn Dehlavī,⁸¹ and S. Moinul Haq⁸² and I. A. Zilli⁸³ maintain that these works are authentic, whereas Mohammad Habib,⁸⁴ K. A. Nizami,⁸⁵ M. Noor Nabi,⁸⁶ Muḥammad Aslam,⁸⁷ Carl W. Ernst⁸⁸ and Bruce B. Lawrence⁸⁹ consider them spurious and apocryphal. It is important to mention that when the *malfūzāt* of Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Ajmerī and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī were referred to before Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, he said that they were apocryphal, as many of the things written in them were contradicted by the actions of the Shaykhs.⁹⁰ A similar statement by Saiyyid Bandahnawāz Gēsūdirāz is found in his own *malfūz* as well.⁹¹

In addition to the *malfūzāt*, Persian *dīwāns* (collections of poetry) are also attributed to Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī,⁹² and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī,⁹³

⁸¹ Akhlāq Ḥusayn Dehlavī, *Ā'inā-i Malfūzāt*, passim.

⁸² S. Moinul Haq, "Rise and Expansion of the Chishtīs in the Subcontinent (I)," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXII, part III (July 1974), p. 164, n.2. (continued on p. 165).

⁸³ Ishtiaq Ahmad Zilli, "Production of Early Malfuzat—Fact or Fiction", Unpublished article, pp. 1-37.

⁸⁴ For a detailed study, see Mohammad Habib, "Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period", *Mediaeval India Quarterly*, vol. I, no. 2 (October 1950), pp. 1-42, rpt. in Habib, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, pp. 385-433.

⁸⁵ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. II, art. *Cishtīyya* by K. A. Nizami, p. 56.

⁸⁶ Mohammad Noor Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India (From 1200 A.D. to 1450 A.D.)* (Aligarh: Muslim University, 1962), Appendix on *Some of the Apocryphal Sayings (malfūzāt) of the Sufis of this Period*, pp. 129-46.

⁸⁷ Aslam, *Malfūzātī Adab ki Tārīkhī Ahammiyyat*, pp. 34, 74, 110-11, and 119-20.

⁸⁸ Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden—Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Centre* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 78.

⁸⁹ Lawrence, *Notes from a Distant Flute*, p. 35.

⁹⁰ Ḥamīd Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, (The Best of Assemblies), (comp. 1354, *Malfūz* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd *Chirāgh-i Dehlī*), ed. K. A. Nizami (Aligarh: Muslim University, 1959), pp. 52-53, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arīfīn*, p. 94.

⁹¹ Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 134.

⁹² Shaykh Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī Ajmērī, *Ghazaliyyāt-i Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī*, MS, Ḥabīb Ganj Collection, Mawlānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh, no. 21/213, and Shaykh Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī Ajmērī, *Dīwān-i Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Ajmērī* (Kanpur: Newal Kishore, 1910). See also Saiyyid Ṣaulat Ḥusayn and Afsar Jamshēd, ed., *Kalām-i 'Irfān Ṭarāz*, Urdu trans. 'Abd al-Qādir Nidā'i, (New Delhi: Maktabah-'i Rūbī for Sultan al-Hind Publications, Ajmer Sharīf, 1992), pp. 65-339.

which are also a subject of controversy as far as their historical authenticity is concerned. Scholars like Habib have doubted its authenticity,⁹⁴ while scholars such as Ḥāfiẓ Maḥmūd Shīrānī, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Dār and Nadhīr Aḥmad have attributed the *dīwān* of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī to other poets such as Mawlānā Mu‘īn al-Dīn ibn Shams al-Dīn Ḥājī Muḥammad Farāhī, Mullā Mu‘īn, Mullā Mu‘īn al-Harvī, Mullā Mu‘īn Kashfī, Mawlānā Mu‘īn al-Dīn Pazdī, or Maskīn Mu‘īn al-Maskīn.⁹⁵ Similarly, Aslam has also proved that the *dīwān* was composed by Mullā Mu‘īn al-Wā‘iẓ al-Harvī.⁹⁶

Therefore, as a result of the above-mentioned measures undertaken by the Chishtī Shaykhs, the Chishtī *Silsilah* was gradually consolidated in India. As for the Sultanate of Delhi, Sultan Iletmish is credited with the consolidation of Muslim rule, as he ruled the Sultanate for almost twenty-six years, till his death in 1236. He undertook a number of measures to consolidate the Sultanate of Delhi, which was in its nascent stage during his reign. The ensuing discussion is focused on these measures whereby the Sultan strengthened the political authority of the Sultanate with the help of the Suhrawardī Sufis. But before that, it does not seem out of place to briefly highlight the religious orientation of Sultan Iletmish.

⁹³ Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, *Dīwān-i Khwājah Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī* (Kanpur: Newal Kishore, 1904).

⁹⁴ According to Habib, the *dīwāns* of both Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī are apocryphal. Idem, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, pp. 426-27.

⁹⁵ Ḥusayn and Jamshēd, *Kalām-i ‘Irfān Tarāz*, p. 340, for details see Preface, pp. 17-26. See also Ḥāfiẓ Maḥmūd Shīrānī, *Maqālāt-i Shīrānī*, vol. 6 (Lahore: Majlis Taraqqī-‘i Adab, 1972), pp. 171-94.

⁹⁶ Muḥammad Aslam, “*Dīwān-i Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Ajmērī*”, *Majallah-i ‘Ulūm-i Islāmiyyah*, Aligarh, vol. 13, no. 1-2 (1980-87), pp. 9-21.

According to many primary sources, Iletmish was a religiously-oriented person,⁹⁷ with strong inclination towards Sufism. Nizami has dealt with the subject of Sultan Iletmish's religious orientation in his various works.⁹⁸ Iletmish was particularly respectful towards the savants and the Sufis. He has recounted the story of his childhood as recorded by Minhāj al-Sirāj Juzjānī in *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāširī* as:

Once a family member gave me a small amount of money, and asked me to go to the market and buy some grapes and bring them. When I went to the market, I lost that money as I was too young, and out of fear I started crying. While I was crying and lamenting, a *darvēsh* came to me, took my hand, and bought me some grapes, and he made me promise that when I attain power and dominion, I would ever regard devotees and ascetics with reverence, and take care of them. I gave him my promise, and all the glory and power which I possess, I have acquired through the blessings of that *darvēsh*.⁹⁹

As a youth, he used to sit in the presence of great Sufi Shaykhs including Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī and Shaykh Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī, and they had predicted that one day he would become a king.¹⁰⁰ It is important to note that Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī, who was a disciple of Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī, had also received *khirqah*

⁹⁷ The Sultan used to worship and pray at night whenever he used to wake up. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 359. Jamālī calls him a *Walī Allāh* (a friend of God) in *Siyar al-Ārifīn*, p. 111. See also Nizām al-Dīn Aḥmad Bakhshī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī* (Lucknow: Newal Kishore, 1875 A.D./1292 A.H.), pp. 29-30, and Sarwar, *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, vol. I, p. 276.

⁹⁸ For a detailed study of Iletmish's religious orientation, see Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, chap. II, "The Religious Life and Leanings of Iltutmish", pp. 13-40. See also Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 106-14. Nizāmī concludes that the religiosity of Sultan Iletmish and his interest in religious matters, however, could not influence his state conduct and positively affect the political climate of the court. Idem, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 131-32. Habib, who has contributed the introduction to the study of Nizāmī, corroborates the views of the latter. *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 22. Nevertheless, Nizāmī's work has been critically reviewed and his inferences have been questioned by Iṣlāhī, who maintains that it seems difficult to completely accept Nizāmī's assertions. Iṣlāhī argues that if a Muslim ruler confines implementation of Islamic injunctions to his personal life, it points to his deficient conception of religion, and cannot be taken to imply the ineffectiveness of religious influence in politics and state conduct. Zafar al-Islām Iṣlāhī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī aur Sharī'at-i Islāmiyyah: Ēk Mukhtaṣar Jā'izah* (Aligarh: Department of Islamic Studies, Muslim University, Aligarh, 2002), pp. 51-68, esp. 56-57.

⁹⁹ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāširī*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁰ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 358, Jamālī, *Siyar al-Ārifīn*, p. 112, and Bābā Farīd, *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn in Hasht Bahisht*, p. 12.

and *khilāfat* from the latter.¹⁰¹ According to another account recorded by ‘Iṣāmī in *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* (written in 1348), in his childhood, once Iletmish attended a *samā’* gathering of some Sufis in Baghdad. He spent the whole night in cutting off the burnt wicks of the candles with a pair of scissors without being asked by anyone.¹⁰² In India, his interest in Sufism grew. He was very sympathetic and generous towards the Sufis, and used to distribute large sums of money among them. Sultan Iletmish is considered to be perhaps the only Muslim king of India who was addressed as a friend by a Chishtī Shaykh, in this instance Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī.¹⁰³

Sultan Iletmish was very respectful of the Sufis and always held them in high esteem. He had very cordial relationship with Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakariyyā of Multan (d. 1262) and Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī (d. 1224/5),¹⁰⁴ who were the disciples of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī. The Sultan also held the Chishtī Sufi Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī in high esteem. According to some hagiographers like Mīr ‘Abd al-Wāḥid Bilgrāmī,¹⁰⁵ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī (d. 1683)¹⁰⁶ and Muftī Ghulām Sarwar (d. 1864),¹⁰⁷ Sultan Iletmish was a disciple of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, but according to Nizami,

¹⁰¹ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Arifīn*, p. 5. For a brief biographical note on Shaykh Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī, see *Anwār-i Aṣfiyā*, pp. 221-24.

¹⁰² ‘Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, p. 114. See also Muḥammad Abū ‘I-Qāsim Hindū Shāh Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, Urdu trans. Mawlawī Muḥammad Fidā ‘Alī Ṭālib (Hyderabad: Dār al-Ṭab’ Jāmi‘ah ‘Uthmāniyyah, 1926), vol. 1, p. 252.

¹⁰³ Iṣḥāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā’* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁴ Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrizī is not to be confused with Shāh Jalāl, another popular Sufi of Bengal. For a detailed discussion, see A. Rahim, “The Saints of Bengal: Sheikh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrezi and Shāh Jalāl,” *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. VIII, part III (July 1960), pp. 206-26. The author has argued that the two Sufis bearing the same name were, in fact, two different persons.

¹⁰⁵ Bilgrāmī, *Saba’ Sanābil*, p. 447.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, pp. 43, 46.

¹⁰⁷ Sarwar, *Khazinat al-Aṣfiyā*, vol. I, p. 276.

this assertion is not corroborated by any earlier source.¹⁰⁸ It seems that the Sultan was only a devotee of the Shaykh, as he had constructed Quṭb Mīnār in the neighbourhood of Delhi, which, according to many historians, was built to commemorate the Shaykh's arrival in India, and therefore, it was called after the name of the Shaykh.¹⁰⁹ The Sultan is said to have accorded warm welcome to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī in Delhi, who took up an official residence there on the request of the Sultan.¹¹⁰ In coming years, the devotion of the Sultan increased for the Sufis, *mashā'ikh*, and *darvēshes*.

In the Sultanate of Delhi, Sultan Iletmish had created the office of *Shaykh al-Islām*, which was more of an honorific title than a permanent position. This title was conferred on prominent religious dignitaries by the Sultan, and the recipients also received stipends as well as land grants from the state.¹¹¹ In lieu of it, the incumbents were not supposed to perform any functions or attend the court regularly. Under Iletmish, the post was occupied by Saiyyid Nūr al-Dīn Mubārak Ghaznavī (d. 1234), a disciple of Suhrawardī Sufī, Shihāb al-Dīn. In Multan, the same post was held by another Suhrawardī Sufi, Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā. Mawlānā Majd al-Dīn Ḥājī, another

¹⁰⁸ Aziz Ahmad also considers the Sultan as a disciple of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī. Idem, "The Sufi and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India", *Der Islam*, band/vol. XXXVIII, heft/no. 1-2 (October 1962), p. 143. For refutation of this assertion, see Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁹ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, vol. XI, art. "Saints and Martyrs (Muhammadan in India)" by T. W. Arnold (London: T & T Clark, 2003 rpt., first published 1911), p. 68, and Walseley Haig, ed., *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. III, *Turks and Afghans* (Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1958), p. 55. See also Raverty's comments in Mawlānā Minhāj al-Dīn Abū 'Umar 'Uthmān, *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, Eng. trans. Major H. G. Raverty, vol. 1. (Lahore: Amir Publications, 1977), p. 622, n.

¹¹⁰ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 164-65.

¹¹¹ For a brief discussion on the dignitaries who were bestowed the title of *Shaykh al-Islām* by Sultan Iletmish, see Rekha Joshi, *Sultan Iltutmish* (Delhi: Bhāratiya Publishing House, 1979), pp. 44-46.

Suhrawardī Sufī and disciple of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn, had accepted the position of *ṣadr* on the insistence of Sultan Iletmish, but he resigned from the post after two years.¹¹² It shows that Iletmish not only held the Sufis in high regard, but that he also tried to give them public recognition by offering the Sufis high positions in the administrative structure of the Sultanate. One may argue that in addition to his personal belief in Sufism and commitment to the Sufis, the Sultan was in dire need of support from the various sections of the Muslim population, particularly the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis, in order to strengthen his political authority. That was why he sought the assistance of the ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufis, not only to help consolidate his power, but to extend his authority over other regions as well.

In the Sultanate of Delhi, in contrast to the Chishtī Sufis, the Shaykhs of Suhrawardī *Silsilah* accepted official titles and positions. The official title of *Shaykh al-Islām* had become hereditary in the family of Shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakariyyā of Multan.¹¹³ In fact, the Suhrawardī traditions regarding the attitude towards the state and political power differed largely from the Chishtīs. As pointed out in Chapter One,¹¹⁴ the founder of the *Silsilah* Suhrawardiyyah, Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Abū ’l-Qāhir Suhrawardī, had close relations with the Caliphs of Baghdad. His nephew, Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī, who is considered to be the real founder of the *Silsilah*, served as an adviser to the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph. The Suhrawardīs played an influential role in the ‘Abbāsīd Empire. Similarly, the Suhrawardī Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi followed

¹¹² Rizvi, *A History of Sufism*, vol. 1, p. 195.

¹¹³ Muhammad Salim, “Shaykh Baha al-Dīn Zakariyya of Multan”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XVII, part 1 (January 1969), p. 9.

¹¹⁴ See chap. 1, pp. 114-15.

the traditions of their preceptors. The disciples of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, who migrated to India, preferred to cherish good and cordial relations with the Sultans of Delhi, princes, *umarā'* and the high state officials. They held meetings with the people associated with the royal court. In turn, the Sultans and members of the ruling elite held them in great esteem. Titles were conferred upon them and important official positions were offered to them as well. They also accepted lavish endowments---both cash and land grants--from the state. In this way, the Suhrawardī Sufis preferred to be associated with the state and rulers in order to cast a positive impact on the state policies.

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, the authority of Iletmish as an independent ruler of the Delhi Sultanate was contested by many rivals including Nāṣir al-Dīn Qabāchāh, the Governor of Sindh and Multan, who was formerly a slave of Sultan Muḥammad Ghaurī.¹¹⁵ Qabāchāh established his independent rule in Sindh and Multan, and set up his capital at Uch. In those days, Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā's centre of activities was Multan. Sultan Iletmish wanted to annex Sindh and Multan to the Sultanate, and in this struggle for power between Iletmish and Qabāchāh the Shaykh openly sided with the former. Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā, jointly with the *qāḍī* of Multan, Sharaf al-Dīn, wrote a letter to Iletmish inviting him to capture Multan and Sindh. The Sultan, upon receiving the invitation, attacked and defeated the forces of Qabāchāh and annexed Multan and Sindh to his Sultanate in 1228.¹¹⁶ The Suhrawardī

¹¹⁵ For a brief study on the political career of Nāṣir al-Dīn Qabāchāh, see Mubarak Ali, "Nasir al-Dīn Qubachah (1206-1228), *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXX, part II (April 1982), pp. 73-85.

¹¹⁶ For one of the earliest authorities to narrate the incident, see Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 206-7, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, p. 112. For details, see Nūr Aḥmad Khān Farīdī, *Tadhkirah-'i Ḥaḍrat Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā Multānī* (Lahore: 'Ulamā' Academy, 1980), pp. 131-33. However, the role

Sufis also supported the state in dealing with the Mongol problem. In 1246, when the Mongol armies had besieged Multan, Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn interceded on behalf of the political authorities, and negotiated peace with the Mongol leaders. The Shaykh gave one hundred thousand *dīnārs* or gold coins to them from his own pocket, and thus, the city of Multan and its inhabitants were saved from destruction.¹¹⁷ In this way, the Sufis of the Suhrawardī *Silsilah* played a crucial role in the consolidation of political authority of the Sultanate of Delhi, but unlike the Sufis under the Mamlūks in Egypt, they did not allow political interference of the state in their affairs, and their *khānqāhs* retained autonomy and independence.

3.4 Distancing from the State: Chishtī Attitude towards the Political Authorities

Scholars of Indian Sufism have theorized the responses of the Indian Sufis, including the Chishtīs, towards the political authorities in the Sultanate of Delhi. Nizami has, for instance, generalized the approaches of the Chishtī and Suhrawardī *Silsilahs* towards the establishment, which he perceived them as diametrically opposite to each other. The Chishtīs cut themselves off completely from kings, politics and government service. Their attitude towards the state was characterized by (i) abstention from the company of the Sultans of Delhi; (ii) refusal to accept *jāgīrs* (land grants) from the Sultans, and (iii) rejection of government service. On the contrary, the Suhrawardī Sufis consorted with the kings and visited the royal courts. They supported the extension of the political power of

played by the Suhrawardī Shaykh in Iletmish's conquest of Sindh and Multan has not been altogether mentioned by Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, pp. 82-84.

¹¹⁷ For some details see Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 256.

the Sultanate and also supported the political authorities in dealing with the Mongol problem.¹¹⁸

Returning to the Chishtī Sufis of India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they distanced themselves from the government and ruling elite, and followed a policy of detachment from political affairs. In fact, among the Chishtīs, detachment from the world was symbolized by a fourfold cap of renunciation called *kullāh-i chahār tarkī*, which symbolized detachment from (i) this world, (ii) the hereafter, (meaning detachment from everything but God), (iii) food and sleep, except whatever is necessary to keep body and soul together, and (iv) the desires of the self.¹¹⁹ That was why, the Chishtī Sufis preferred detachment from politics and never indulged in issues of political nature. In a nutshell, the Chishtī *Silsilah* was an autonomous institution completely divorced from political life, as the Chishtī Sufis had carved out an independent space of their own during the Sultanate of Delhi, where there was no interference of the state in practical terms. In the words of Riazul Islam, the central governing principle of the Chishtīs was “to preserve their independence and to secure it against governmental interference.”¹²⁰ What follows is a discussion on and analysis of how the early Chishtīs in India carved out that space in the Sultanate of Delhi:

¹¹⁸ For details, see K. A. Nizami, “Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and Their Attitude towards the State”, *Islamic Culture*, The Hyderabad Quarterly Review, Hyderabad, Deccan, vol. XXII (October 1948), and vol. XXIII (January and April 1949), (rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), pp. 387-98, and 13-21, and Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 240-56.

¹¹⁹ ‘Abd al-Rahmān, *Bazm-i Šūfiyah*, pp. 42-43.

¹²⁰ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 241.

3.4.1 Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer

Some hagiographical sources cast some light on the perception of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn towards kings, but their authenticity is dubious.¹²¹ The Khwājah kept himself aloof from political affairs and the court life of Delhi, thus, exhibiting an attitude of indifference towards the State and rulers.¹²² He had left Delhi and settled at Ajmer, which was the seat of the Chauhān power in Rajasthan at that time, but soon the region was overrun by the Turkish troops, and was annexed to the Sultanate of Delhi. With its capital at Delhi, Ajmer was situated in a far off place on the periphery of the Sultanate, where the political influence of the state was relatively marginal. Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn spent more than three decades of his life there. According to Jamālī, during his stay in Ajmer, he visited Delhi only twice.¹²³ On one of these visits, when Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn wanted to inform Sultan Iletmish about his arrival in Delhi, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn prevented him from

¹²¹ Hagiographical sources cast some light on the perception of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn towards kings. For instance, *Dalīl al-‘Ārifīn* informs that Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn narrated an anecdote that after the death of Sultan Maḥmūd [sic] of Ghaznah, someone saw him in a dream, and the Sultan told him that he was forgiven by God for showing respect to the Holy Quran on a certain occasion. For details of the anecdote, see Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, *Dalīl al-‘Ārifīn* in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 19-20. Nonetheless, the anecdote seems to be fabricated, as an almost similar anecdote in *Asrār al-Awliyā’* is attributed to Bābā Farīd regarding his perception about Sultan Muḥammad of Ghaur. In *Asrār al-Awliyā’*, Bābā Farīd informs the participants of his *majlis* that after the death of Sultan Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh of Ghaur, someone saw him in a dream, and the Sultan told him that he was pardoned by God for showing respect to the Holy Quran. Iṣḥāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā’* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 37. The two anecdotes not only differ in the name of the kings, but also the details of the events narrated by the kings are somewhat different. However, it indicates that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when probably these *malḥūzāt* were distorted, or altogether fabricated, there was a tendency to portray the renowned kings of the past in a hallowed manner so as to make them appear pious and religiously-oriented. It also points to the fact that the Muslim political consciousness demanded from their rulers to be pious and God-fearing. Cf. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 440, where the same incident is narrated by Amīr Khūrd on the basis of an anonymous authority in which the protagonist is Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghaznah.

¹²² Aziz Ahmad mistakenly assumes that Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn “*inaugurated* the Chishtī tradition of devotion to a life of poverty, with an attitude of dissociation from the ruler and the state.” Aziz Ahmad, “The Sufi and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India”, p. 142. (italics mine) As pointed out earlier, *faqr* or voluntary poverty was a celebrated virtue commonly practiced by the Sufis, whereas many of them were dissociated from the political authorities. It was also prevalent among the pre-Indian Chishtīs.

¹²³ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 12.

doing so.¹²⁴ It clearly shows that the Khwājah did not want to see the Sultan, as he preferred to stay completely aloof from the kings and rulers.

Some hagiographical sources inform that Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn had accepted a land grant from the state, but one comes across a number of inconsistencies in the account. Therefore, these sources and the details of the incident need to be explored. According to *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn’s sons had received a village near Ajmer as a grant from the state, but the *muqta‘ dār* (chief officer of revenue grant) had confiscated it. The Khwājah was pressed by his sons to send one of his family members to the royal court in Delhi to get an authorization letter for the land. When one of his family members went to Delhi and met Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, the latter requested him to stay at his place and instead allow him to go to the court. When Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn went to the court of Iletmish, the Sultan was overjoyed and immediately ordered that the relevant document should be given to him immediately. Moreover, the Sultan also presented some cash offering to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, which he accepted.¹²⁵ The account of *Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim* differs from Amīr Khūrd’s narrative, as Gēsūdirāz informs that the Khwājah had personally come to Delhi in order to get the letter, but Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn requested him to allow him [Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn] to go to the court of Iletmish.¹²⁶ Another primary source, a *malfūz* titled *Durr-i Nizāmī*, which records the conversations of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ as compiled by his disciple, ‘Alī ibn Maḥmūd Jāndār, informs that it was a land grant which the sons of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn had received

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

¹²⁵ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 53. It is important to note that Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī has not recorded this story in *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*.

¹²⁶ Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim*, p. 207.

from the state.¹²⁷ As for the account of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, it is quite vague, as he writes that the Khwājah had visited Delhi for correction in the royal decree on the insistence of his son, Fakhr al-Dīn, who cultivated his land in Māndan near Ajmer.¹²⁸

Nizami’s interpretation of these works is different, as he considers the land to be an *ihyā’* land,¹²⁹ which was brought under cultivation by the family of the Khwājah,¹³⁰ and not a *jāgīr* or land grant from the state. Nonetheless, the basis of Nizami’s interpretation is not clear.¹³¹ In this regard, Riazul Islam’s views are self-contradictory: at one place he calls it an *ihyā’* land, but at another place he maintains that “the Ajmeri master’s example in seeking and accepting a land grant was followed neither by Sh. Farid nor by Sh. Nizam-ud-dīn.”¹³²

Regarding the acceptance of cash in *futūḥ* from the Sultan by Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, Riazul Islam maintains that it was meant for Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī, and not for the Shaykh. He further adds that earlier Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn had rejected a similar offer from a high state official.¹³³ Again it may be argued here that if we accept the narrative as authentic, then Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn accepted the offering which was meant for Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn, as the former had no authority to turn it down without prior permission of

¹²⁷ ‘Alī ibn Maḥmūd Jāndār, *Durr-i Nizāmī*, MS, Mawlānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh, Rotograph no. 264, f. 83b.

¹²⁸ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 44, 46, 130.

¹²⁹ Literally, *ihyā’* means bringing to life. According to Hanafite law, it refers to an unclaimed land in an unpopulated area, which is brought under cultivation, and hence, becomes the property of the cultivator.

¹³⁰ Nizāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 118.

¹³¹ Probably Nizāmī has interpreted it from the fact that Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī, a disciple of the Khwājah, used to cultivate land for his livelihood in the town of Suwāl in Nāgaur.

¹³² Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, pp. 241–42.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

the latter, i.e. his preceptor. Moreover, the Khwājah does not seem to have specifically instructed Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn regarding the acceptance or rejection of cash *futūḥ* from the Sultan. Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn accepted the offering as a trust of his preceptor, and could not refuse to accept it on his behalf.

The land story has been accepted by Nizami though he writes elsewhere that the Chishtīs looked down upon possession of personal property as a negation of faith in God.¹³⁴ In this way, Nizami's interpretation regarding the *iḥyā'* land seems to contradict this assertion. Similarly, Riazul Islam too accepts it without any reservations. Nevertheless, the authenticity of the land story has been challenged by Rizvi, who considers the anecdote apocryphal. According to Rizvi, first, no *muqṭa'* could dare to trouble the Khwājah and his family to get the authorization letter, as during the early decades of the establishment of Muslim rule in north India, no advance authorization was apparently demanded by the state. Secondly, instead of personally going to Delhi, the Khwājah could have asked Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī or his friends in Delhi to arrange for the document.¹³⁵ One may put forward the following counter-arguments: First, many '*ulamā'*' associated with the Sultanate and some high state officials had troublesome relationship with the early Chishtī Sufis in India, which is clearly borne out by historical evidence.¹³⁶ The popularity of the Chishtī Shaykhs among the people at large had not made them immune from harassment from the state officials. Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn were also troubled by some of their contemporary *qāḍīs*

¹³⁴ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. II, art. *Cishtiyya* by Nizami, p. 55.

¹³⁵ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism*, vol. 1, p. 125.

¹³⁶ For instance, see Bābā Farīd's relationship with Shēr Khān, the warden of the marches and the governor of Multan, and a *qāḍī* of Ajōdhan in chap.4, pp. 269-70.

and other state officials, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Secondly, there could be more than one reasons for the Khwājah's visit to Delhi. In short, it seems difficult to suspect the authenticity of the story on grounds presented by Rizvi.

Nonetheless, the land story raises some more critical questions than those mentioned above: why the land grant was offered to the sons of the Khwājah, and not personally to Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn? If it was offered to the sons, then it seems improbable that the sons of the Khwājah had received the grant without permission from their father. The relationship of the Khwājah with his sons seems problem-free according to hagiographical and *mal'ūzāt* literature. If the land grant was offered to the Khwājah, it seems even more unlikely that he had accepted it contrary to the traditions of his *Silsilah*. Moreover, while reading the story in the primary sources, it seems as if the Khwājah had expired and his sons had received the land grant after his demise, but again there is a catch here: if we accept that the land was an official grant received after the demise of the Khwājah by his sons, then how could Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn in Delhi facilitate them in getting the authorization letter, as he had expired during the lifetime of the Khwājah. Then, it also seems improbable that the Khwājah or his sons had received the official land grant or *jāgīr*, but its documents were not delivered to them.

Coming back to Nizami's assertion that the Khwājah had *not* accepted a *land grant* from the Sultan, but he had merely received an authorization letter for the land acquired through legally permitted means, which seems to carry some weight, it raises another question: if the land story is partly rejected, i.e. the point that it was an offering

from the state is not accepted, then on what grounds one can accept the rest of the story? One may usefully point out here that Amīr Khūrd, who mentions the land grant story, writes elsewhere that Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī had once turned down the offer of some cash and land grant from the *muqṭa'* of Nāgaur saying: "Our ancestors (Shaykhs of Chishtī *Silsilah*) have never accepted such things."¹³⁷ If Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn had accepted the land grant from the state, then how could the Shaykh have said it? Here the two accounts of Amīr Khūrd seem to contradict each other, which clearly show that one of the two must be apocryphal. In addition to this internal criticism, here one recalls the assertion of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', as recorded in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, that on a similar occasion when a landlord once sent some cash and the grant of two orchards to him, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn turned down the offer saying: "None of the *mashā'ikh* of our *Silsilah* have done anything like that".¹³⁸ Therefore, in the light of these arguments, one can infer that the land grant story is a later day fabrication. Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn had never accepted any land or even a cash grant from the state.

As pointed out earlier, the authorship of a treatise *Kanz al-Asrār* (The Treasure of Secrets) is attributed to Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn, which he is said to have written at the behest of his preceptor, Khwājah 'Uthmān Hārwanī, for the guidance of Sultan Iletmish.¹³⁹ But the work is also considered to be a later day fabrication.

¹³⁷ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 157.

¹³⁸ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 218-19.

¹³⁹ Sharīb, *Khawaja Gharib Nawaz*, pp. 102-3.

According to Rizvi, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn visited the capital sometime after 1221. In those days, the *Shaykh al-Islām* of Delhi was Najm al-Dīn Ṣughrā,¹⁴⁰ who along with some other Sufis had probably invited him to visit Delhi. He adds that the Khwājah made another trip to Delhi later, in order to acquaint himself with the struggle between the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Chishtī Sufis, and the general crisis in the Sufī circles in Delhi.¹⁴¹ It also reveals that from the earliest days of Chishtī *Silsilah* in India, the Chishtī Sufis and the ‘*ulamā*’ (particularly those who held government positions) had developed some differences. These differences were due to some Sufī doctrines and practices, most notable being *samā*’, which the ‘*ulamā*’ generally did not approve. Nevertheless, beneath these theological controversies, the ‘*ulamā*’ were critical of the Sufis because of their growing popularity, which seemed to be undermining the religious authority of the ‘*ulamā*’. As for the Sufis, they were critical of the ‘*ulamā*’ for their exclusive preoccupation with external observances and rituals of Islam, devoid of any inner meaning and essence.

3.4.2 Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī

Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī Ushī, son of Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad Mūsa, was born at Ush,¹⁴² in the province of Jaxartes. When did he perform *bay‘at* at the hands of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn, is a matter of controversy among the hagiographers. Whatever can be gathered from contradictory accounts is that the Khwājah had initiated Shaykh

¹⁴⁰ The *Shaykh al-Islām* of Delhi, Najm al-Dīn Ṣughrā, was a disciple of Khwājah ‘Uthmān Hārwanī, who was the preceptor of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer. However, unlike Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn, he had chosen the path of external conformity to *Sharī‘ah* as well as that of association with the political authorities.

¹⁴¹ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism*, vol. 1, p. 125.

¹⁴² Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Arifīn*, p. 16.

Quṭb al-Dīn before his arrival in India, and most probably this had happened in the city of Baghdad.¹⁴³ Like Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn was also very widely-traveled. He migrated to India, and first arrived in Multan, where he developed friendship with the renowned Suhrawardī Sufi, Shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakarīyyā of Multan. According to *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, in those days Multan was invaded by the Mongol hordes, and Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Qabāchāh, the independent ruler of Multan, sought the help of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn against the Mongols. Story has it that the Shaykh gave the Sultan an arrow, and asked him to shoot it blindly into the camp of the Mongol forces. Qabāchāh did the same, and the next day the Mongols retreated.¹⁴⁴ Whatever the actual event, it seems that the Shaykh extended help to the Sultan when the lives of the inhabitants of the city were threatened by invaders. This incident increased the devotion of Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn to the Shaykh. The Sultan requested Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn to stay in Multan, but he left for Delhi.

On the order of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī made the city of Delhi, the capital of the Sultanate, the centre of his activities sometime after 1221. In those days, Delhi had acquired immense significance. In fact, owing to the devastation of Central Asia, Iraq and Persia by the Mongols, the Sultanate of Delhi was considered the only peaceful region safe from the Mongols in the east. Therefore, a

¹⁴³ According to Amīr Khūrd, he had performed *bay'at* at the hands of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn in the Mosque of Imām Abū Layth Samarqandī in the presence of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, Shaykh Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī, Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Chishtī and Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣafāhānī. Idem, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 48. However, the source of Amīr Khūrd seems to be so-called apocryphal *malḥūz* titled *Dalīl al-'Ārifīn* in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 1-2. For varied accounts, see Rizvi, *A History of Sufism*, vol. 1, p. 134, n.2.

¹⁴⁴ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 185, Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 50, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 19. The incident has also been recorded by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', *Rāḥat al-Qulūb*, (the *malḥūz* of Bābā Farīd, comp. Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā') in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 26.

number of religious dignitaries, 'ulamā', and Sufis had migrated to India, and taken abode at its capital. When Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn reached Delhi, he was warmly welcomed by Sultan Iletmish, who invited the Shaykh to stay in the city, but he refused, and instead set up his *khānqāh* in Kīlūkhari near the Jumnā in the suburbs of Delhi.¹⁴⁵ He, thus, avoided the hustle and bustle of city-life, and maintained some distance from the court and the royal palace. However, according to Jamālī, since the Shaykh's residence was far from the city, Sultan Iletmish requested the Shaykh to take his residence near the city. The Shaykh accepted the request, and stayed near the Mosque of Malik 'Izz al-Dīn.¹⁴⁶ It seems difficult to accept the assertion of Jamālī, as it seems highly improbable that the Shaykh had ever shifted his *khānqāh* or his residence at the behest of the Sultan. No other source mentions this. However, the Shaykh might have temporarily stayed at the said mosque while visiting Delhi.

Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn continued the traditions of his *Silsilah* as well as that of his preceptor, Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn. After the demise of *Shaykh al-Islām* Jamāl al-Dīn Bisṭāmī, Sultan Iletmish offered the designation and title to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn,¹⁴⁷ but he declined to accept it saying that the Chishtī traditions did not allow this.¹⁴⁸ In this way, the Shaykh turned down the offer of an official position, but with it also the stipend and land grant, which were bestowed upon the recipient of the official title. By refusing to accept these, the Shaykh had, in fact, refused to be formally associated with the regime.

¹⁴⁵ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, p. 19.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁴⁷ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 131, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, p. 20. However, according to Nizami, when Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn declined to accept the office, it was offered to Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Bisṭāmī, but Nizami does not cite any evidence for the statement. Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 162.

¹⁴⁸ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 131, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, p. 20.

He did not want to be identified with the existing political order. He had declined it not for personal reasons alone; he had also done so in pursuance of the traditions of his *Silsilah* set by the early Chishtī masters outside India. He was trying to adhere to, and thus preserve, the traditions of his *Silsilah*, which demanded independence from the state. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that people used the same title of *Shaykh al-Islām* for Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn in reverence and devotion,¹⁴⁹ which implied that the state was not the only source of bestowing this title upon the religious dignitaries; public opinion was also a source of recognition of an individual's piety and his religious authority.

The attitude of the early Chishtīs towards *shughl* (government service) is evident from an anecdote: Once Sultan Iletmish offered the post of *qāḍī* to a certain Shaykh Ḥasan, who pretended to turn mad to evade his appointment. When Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī heard of his pretended derangement, he said: "Shaykh Ḥasan is not mad, he is wise (*dānā*)." Thus, the suffix of *dānā* was added to the name of Shaykh Ḥasan.¹⁵⁰ It clearly reflects the perceptions of the Chishtī Sufis regarding official appointments, as they did not allow their close associates and *khulafā'* to join government service, though there was no such restriction for the ordinary disciples and devotees.

On another occasion, when Sultan Iletmish offered him a *jāgīr* of six villages, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn refused to accept it saying that it was a tradition of their spiritual ancestors not to accept such things.¹⁵¹ On another occasion, the Shaykh turned down the

¹⁴⁹ For instance, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 62.

¹⁵⁰ Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 246.

¹⁵¹ Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', *Rāḥat al-Qulūb in Hasht Bahisht*, p. 40.

offering of cash *futūh* from Iletmish.¹⁵² Similarly, once he refused to accept a cash offering presented by the Sultan's *hājib* (chamberlain), Malik Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Aybeg.¹⁵³ Once a poet named Nāṣirī, who had migrated to Delhi from Transoxiana, requested the Shaykh to pray for the acclamation of his poetry at Iletmish's court. The Shaykh prayed for him and also prophesized his success at the court. The Sultan praised Nāṣirī for his poetry, and also rewarded him with 35,000 *tankahs*. As a token of gratitude, Nāṣirī offered half of the total sum to the Shaykh, but he refused to accept the offering.¹⁵⁴ According to Bābā Farīd, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn never used to accept cash grants or *futūh* from anyone,¹⁵⁵ including the *umarā'* and the high state officials.

Sultan Iletmish held Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn in high esteem, and the former used to visit the *khānqāh* of the latter.¹⁵⁶ Once the Shaykh advised the Sultan:

O ruler of Delhi! It is incumbent on thee to be good to all poor people, mendicants, *darvēshes* and helpless folk. Treat all men kindly and strive for their welfare. Everyone who thus behaves towards his subjects is looked after by the Almighty and all his enemies turn into friends.¹⁵⁷

On the contrary, according to Amīr Khūrd, the Shaykh had even refused to grant permission to the Sultan to visit his *khānqāh*.¹⁵⁸ A similar view has been recorded in Gēsūdirāz's *malfūz* titled *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, which informs that when Shaykh Quṭb al-

¹⁵² Iṣhāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā'* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 82.

¹⁵³ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁴ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 359, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 28.

¹⁵⁵ Iṣhāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā'* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁶ According to 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, the Sultan used to visit the *khānqāh* of the Shaykh once a week. Idem, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, p. 127. However, according to Jamālī, the Sultan used to visit the *khānqāh* twice a week. Idem, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁷ Mawlānā Tāj al-Dīn, *Risālah-'i Ḥāl-i Khānwādah-'i Chisht*, MS, Personal Collection of K. A. Nizami, f. 17b as cited in Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 189.

¹⁵⁸ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 53.

Dīn went to the court of Iletmish for getting the authorization for the *iḥyā'* land, and the Sultan heard about the arrival of the Shaykh, he got down from the throne and rushed to receive him barefoot. A number of times the Sultan had visited the *khānqāh* of the Shaykh in Delhi, but each time the Shaykh had refused to see the Sultan.¹⁵⁹

It seems difficult to accept the accounts of *Siyar al-Awliyā'* and *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* on the following bases: first, *Risālah-'i Ḥāl-i Khānwādah-'i Chisht* mentions the advice of the Shaykh to the Sultan in a personal meeting, which shows that the Shaykh had not refused to see the Sultan or stop him from visiting his *khānqāh*. Secondly, it is the author of *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, who informs us about the *iḥyā'* land story, according to which the Shaykh personally went to the court of Iletmish for getting an authorization letter from Sultan Iletmish.¹⁶⁰ If the *iḥyā'* land story is taken to be true, then it does not seem difficult to accept that the Shaykh had never forbade the Sultan from visiting his *khānqāh*, otherwise the Shaykh had no moral grounds to visit the court of Iletmish. Thirdly, according to Jamālī, when Khwājah Mu'in al-Dīn visited Delhi, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn wanted to inform Sultan Iletmish about his arrival in Delhi, but the Khwājah prevented him from doing so.¹⁶¹ It can be inferred from it that the Shaykh used to see the Sultan. Fourthly, on another occasion, when the Sultan saw Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) in a dream indicating a site for the construction of a water reservoir (*ḥawḍ*) in Delhi, the Sultan sought the permission from the Shaykh to see him in order to consult him on the matter, which was immediately granted.¹⁶² Fifthly, according to *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn*, the

¹⁵⁹ Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 207.

¹⁶⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 53.

¹⁶¹ Jamālī, *Siyar al-Ārifīn*, p. 21.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

malfūz of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn compiled by his disciple and successor, Bābā Farīd, once the Sultan held the feet of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, and sought his blessing and prayers.¹⁶³ Lastly, *Asrār al-Awliyā'*, the *malfūz* of Bābā Farīd, informs us about a meeting of the Sultan with the Shaykh in which Saiyyid Nūr al-Dīn Mubārak Ghaznavī was also present.¹⁶⁴ It can be inferred that the Sultan used to see the Shaykh, and the accounts of *Siyar al-Awliyā'* and *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* can not be accepted.

Historical evidence suggests the problem of scarcity of water in Delhi. As pointed out above, in order to overcome the problem, Sultan Iletmish had decided to construct a *ḥawḍ*, but he was unable to select an appropriate site for it. According to Amīr Khusrau, both the Sultan and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn saw Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) in a dream indicating a site for the construction of the reservoir. Accordingly, the reservoir was constructed there.¹⁶⁵ According to Jamālī, the Sultan was unable to ascertain the exact location of the site, where the *ḥawḍ* was to be constructed. He sent a messenger to the Shaykh, and sought permission to see him. When he was granted permission, Iletmish came to see the Shaykh, who then located the site.¹⁶⁶ Nizami observes that though Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn did not associate himself with the ruler and the ruling elite in building the political institutions of the Sultanate, he “extended his moral support to the Sultan in the construction of public works and centres of cultural activities. Many

¹⁶³ When the Shaykh asked him what he wanted, the Sultan replied: “God has bestowed power and dominion upon me, but I request you to let me know that on the Day of Judgment, in which group of people will I be counted, and I also request you to help and support me when my deeds will be accounted?” Bābā Farīd, *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn* in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 23-24.

¹⁶⁴ Ishāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā'* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 96.

¹⁶⁵ Amīr Khusrau, *Qirān al-Sa'adayn*, ed. S. Ḥasan Baranī (Aligarh: Institute Aligarh College, 1337 A.H./1918 A.D.), pp. 30-35. See also Bābā Farīd, *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn* in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁶⁶ Jamālī, *Siyar al-ʿArifīn*, p. 25.

hagiographical works refer to his keen interest in the construction of the famous water reservoir, the *hawḍ-i Shamsī*.¹⁶⁷ In fact, the *hawḍ*, in addition to being a source of water, soon became a centre of cultural and religious activities in the city.

It seems that not only the Sultan was a devotee of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, the Shaykh too respected the former. In *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn*, the Shaykh is reported to have spoken well of the Sultan and lauded his religiosity and love for the Sufis and *darvēshes*.¹⁶⁸ As already mentioned, the Sultan was called a 'friend' by Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn.¹⁶⁹ Once when the Sultan fell ill, he sent his *wazīr* to the *khānqāh* of the Shaykh asking him to pray for his health. Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn prayed for the health of the Sultan, and the latter recovered.¹⁷⁰ As for the relationship with the Sultan of Delhi, Shams al-Dīn Iletmish, was concerned, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī seems to be an exception, as Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī and Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Suwālī had never contacted the Sultan. However, it must be borne in mind that the two Shaykhs were settled in Ajmer and Nāgaur respectively, as compared to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, who was asked by his preceptor to live in Delhi—the seat of the Sultanate.

Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn died in 1235 during the lifetime of his preceptor. Before death, he had made a will that his funeral prayer would be led by the person who had never missed the four *rak'ats* of supererogatory or non-obligatory parts (*sunnat-i ghayr mu'kaddah*) of late afternoon prayer ('*aṣr*). Only Sultan Iletmish fulfilled the condition,

¹⁶⁷ Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 189.

¹⁶⁸ See details in Bābā Farīd, *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn* in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 23-24.

¹⁶⁹ Iṣhāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā'* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 82.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

and thus led the funeral prayer.¹⁷¹ This gesture of the Shaykh must have made the piety and devoutness of the Sultan public. Thus, the will of the Shaykh may be taken as a public declaration of the piety of the Sultan by a celebrated Sufi of the era, who was highly esteemed by the people at large. Such a declaration must have increased the respect and standing of the Sultan amongst the people, particularly the religiously-oriented people in the Sultanate.

3.4.3 Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Suwālī

Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Suwālī was another prominent disciple of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī.¹⁷² He is not to be confused with his namesake, a Suhrawardī Sufi, who used the epithet of *Qāḍī* as well. Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī is the first Chishtī Sufi in India who wrote books on themes related to Sufism.¹⁷³ He settled at Suwāl,¹⁷⁴ a village in Nāgaur (Rajputana), which was at a distance of four days journey from Delhi, in contrast to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, who lived in the urban environment of Delhi.

Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn preferred to live a life of extreme austerity. He was noted for his poverty and vegetarianism. He had a small piece of land which he used to cultivate for his livelihood, but its produce was insufficient and he and his wife, Bībī Khadijah, who was also a pious lady, had to starve for days, but despite his abject poverty, he never accepted any cash or land grant from the state or from state officials as

¹⁷¹ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Šūfiyah*, p. 86, and Sarwar, *Khazīnat al-Asfiyā*, vol. I, p. 275.

¹⁷² For a brief biographical sketch and views about Sufism, see B. A. Dar, “Shaikh Ḥamīd-ud-Din of Nagaur—Scholar-Saint of the Thirteenth Century”, *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, University of the Punjab, Lahore, vol. XV, no. 1 (January 1978), pp. 21-50.

¹⁷³ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, p. 119.

¹⁷⁴ ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 36. For a detailed biographical account, see Iḥsān al-Ḥaqq Fārūqī, *Sulṭān al-Tārikīn* (Karachi: Dā’irah Mu‘īn al-Ma’arif, 1963).

personal gift.¹⁷⁵ Amīr Khūrd writes that once the *muqta'* of Nāgaur came to know about his financial hardships, and he requested the Shaykh to accept some cash and a land grant. The Shaykh turned down his offer saying: "Our ancestors (preceptors of Chishtī *Silsilah*) have never accepted such things. The one *bīghah* land which I possess is sufficient for me."¹⁷⁶ On a similar occasion, when one of his contemporary Sultans heard about the poverty of the Shaykh, sent 500 *tankahs* and grant of a village to him, he refused to accept the land as well as the cash grants.¹⁷⁷ He did not agree to become a beneficiary of the state. It was for his austerity and renunciation that he was given the title of *Sultān al-Tārikīn* (King of Ascetics) by his preceptor Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn.¹⁷⁸ Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn was quite critical of the accumulation of wealth by the Suhrawardī Sufī Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā of Multan, who was quite an affluent Sufī, who possessed riches and assets. In this regard, they exchanged letters, and their elaborate correspondence regarding *faqr*, or voluntary poverty, and *ghina'*, or wealth, has been preserved.¹⁷⁹ In fact, a trader of Nāgaur used to take his goods to Multan, and come back. He acted as carrier of letters between Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn and Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā.

A number of inferences can be drawn from the above discussion. The early Chishtīs in India had never accepted land grants from the Sultans, the *umarā'* and the high state officials. A number of explanations for it can be suggested. First, the doctrinal

¹⁷⁵ Jamālī, *Siyar al-ʿĀrifīn*, p. 12.

¹⁷⁶ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 157.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 36.

¹⁷⁹ Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī, *Rasā'il-i Sultān al-Tārikīn*, MS, Mawlānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh, *Fārsī Taṣawwuf* no. 21/161. For some details of their conversation, see Jamālī, *Siyar al-ʿĀrifīn*, pp. 13-14, and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, pp. 36-37.

position of the Sufis, who considered *faqr* to be a celebrated virtue, did not allow this. Secondly, the early or pre-Indian Chishtī traditions also did not allow this, as the early Chishtīs had never accepted such offers. Thus, it was essentially against the ethos of early Chishtī traditions to accept land grants from the kings or *umarā'* or high officials of the state.¹⁸⁰ In fact, the practice was not exclusively in vogue among the Chishtīs, many renowned Sufis of the past had turned down similar offers from their contemporary 'Abbāsīd Caliphs and Kings.

Here it seems important to indicate the social implications of land ownership in India. In the Sultanate of Delhi, *iqṭa'* was a transferable revenue assignment, which was the source of income of the ruling elite. *Iqṭa'*s were managed by a state official called *muṣṭa'* or *muṣṭa'i*, who not only collected *kharāj* (the land tax) and other taxes but also kept and maintained troops as well.¹⁸¹ So a *muṣṭa'* or *muṣṭa'i* was a revenue collector-cum-military commander. In this military feudalism, there was no distinction between the civil (revenue collection) and military functionaries. The army of the Sultanate was perceived as an instrument of coercion, and the Hindus particularly despised it, as they began to associate the Muslim conquest with loss of political power, land and wealth. The Muslim aristocracy in possession of land for revenue collection and military purposes was generally disliked by the Indian population at large, which was predominantly

¹⁸⁰ Muhammad Salim has mistakenly asserted that the Chishtī *Silsilah* "developed principles with which the Chishtīs at home had little to do. The Chishtī *Silsilah* of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent is an institution of purely local growth." Idem, "The Attitude of the Chishtī Saints towards Political Power", *The Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference (Second Session) held at Lahore, 1952*, comp. S. Moinul Haq (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, n.d.), p. 225. It may be pointed out that many traditions of the Indian Chishtīs were a continuation of the practices of the pre-Indian Chishtīs such as detachment from court, kings and politics, and adoption of voluntary poverty.

¹⁸¹ Irfan Habib, "Economic History of the Delhi Sultanate—An Essay in Interpretation", *The Indian Historical Review*, Indian Council of Historical Research, vol. IV, no. 2 (January 1978), pp. 294-95.

composed of Hindus. Moreover, in a tradition-oriented Indian society, land was associated with power, as the socio-economic base of the Sultanate was largely agrarian. One of the reasons for not accepting land grants from the state by the Chishtī Sufis may be that they wanted to avoid any identification with the power structure as well as the army of the Sultanate.

Nizami contends that the Sufis of Chishtī *Silsilah* in India, who had adopted an attitude of indifference towards the government, had done so in pursuance of the traditions of Sufism prevalent in Central Asia, Persia and Iraq, which demanded from the Sufis a complete abstention from the company of kings and *umarā'*, condemnation of the government service and rejection of all land grants from the state.¹⁸² He adds that there were many psychological, legal and religious considerations behind it, which have been summarized as such:¹⁸³ first, the Sufis believed that the government service distracted a Sufi from the path of his spiritual progress; secondly, the income of the state or revenue was derived from unlawful sources; thirdly, the political systems that existed under the Muslim rulers were considered secular by the Sufis, which was unacceptable to them. The Sufi theorists like Imām Ghazzālī considered it obligatory to have the conviction that the atrocities of the governing class deserved to be condemned. Therefore, a Sufi should have no contact with the kings and their associates. Lastly, the Chishtī Sufis believed that by associating themselves with the exploiting classes, a Sufi might isolate himself from the ordinary people, who ought to be the main focus of his activities.

¹⁸² See some details in Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 242-48.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 240-1.

Here it seems useful to briefly explore the ideas and views of Imām Ghazzālī in this regard, whose influential work *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm al-Dīn* (composed about 1095-7) throws considerable light on it. According to him, before accepting the gifts and allowances from the rulers and kings, one is required to take into account that the source of wealth of the ruler should be lawful, the wealth should be rightfully acquired by the ruler, and the one who receives the gift should be qualified to receive it, such as a learned person and a soldier. He further argues that many Companions of the Prophet who lived up to the time of the tyrant rulers used to accept properties from them. However, some of them did not accept any allowance or property out of greater sense of piety.¹⁸⁴ Then Imām Ghazzālī goes on to discuss the four stages of piety in relation to the acceptance of properties from rulers. In the first stage, which is the stage of highest piety, the rightly guided Caliphs and some of the extremely pious men did not accept anything from the state treasury and rulers. In the second stage, Imām Ghazzālī writes that one may take from the ruler provided the wealth is legal. In the third stage, one can accept the gifts from the rulers and give them in charity to the poor and the needy, even though the ruler is a tyrant. In the fourth stage, the properties of the rulers have been established to be illegal and therefore cannot be accepted, nor can be given in charity. Imām Ghazzālī concludes the discussion saying that in his times (i. e. eleventh century A.D.), most of the properties of the rulers were unlawful.¹⁸⁵

Imām Ghazzālī also devotes a section of *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm al-Dīn* to the question of frequenting the courts of the rulers. He discusses three conditions which arise in visiting

¹⁸⁴ Al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' Ulum-id-Din*, (Fazal-ul-Karim), pp. 97-98.

¹⁸⁵ See details in *Ibid.*, pp. 98-101.

the royal courts: (i) evil effects of frequenting them; (ii) the manners to be observed; and (iii) to keep aloof from them. Discussing the first condition, Imām Ghazzālī maintains that it is not commendable to frequent the rulers and administrators according to *Sharī'ah*. He cites some *aḥādīth* and the sayings of some of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) and Sufis in support of it.¹⁸⁶ He considers it sinful, and asserts:

He who frequents them [the rulers] faces sin, as by his actions, silence, words and invocations, he commits disobedience to God. If he bends his head to a tyrant ruler, or kisses his hand and does actions like that he commits sin. If he sees actions in the Darbar [royal court] of the ruler which are unlawful, he commits sin by his silence as it is his duty then to protest against such illegal actions. If one praises him and supports his illegal actions, he commits sin. If he invokes God for the long life of a tyrant, it is illegal.¹⁸⁷

While discussing the second condition, Imām Ghazzālī maintains that after meeting with the rulers, give him sound advice and inform him of the injunctions and prohibitions of *Sharī'ah*. As for the third condition, he contends that the learned men should not frequent the royal courts of the rulers, and again cites the views of scholars and sages as well as some *aḥādīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH).¹⁸⁸

The assertion of Nizami¹⁸⁹ that the Sufi ideas and attitudes were largely shaped by the views of Imām Ghazzālī as expressed in *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm al-Dīn*, has been questioned by Riazul Islam. According to him, other works of Imām Ghazzālī such as *Mustazhiri* and, more particularly, *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*, composed much after *Iḥyā'*, point in almost the opposite direction as far as the views of their author about state and government are concerned. Logically, the works that are composed later should claim authority over the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 101-2.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁸⁸ See details in Ibid., pp. 103-7.

¹⁸⁹ Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 240-1.

earlier one. In *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*, Imām Ghazzālī emphasizes the need to honour and obey kings, and assumes their revenues, collected on the basis of ancient usage, to be wholly just. Therefore, it is not proper to depend on *Ihyā'* exclusively. "One has to balance what Imām Ghazzālī says in *Ihyā'* with what he says in the *Mustazhiri* and, even more significantly, what he says in the *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*."¹⁹⁰ However, it may be added here that *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm al-Dīn* was far more popular and widely read by the people as compared to Imām Ghazzālī later works. Therefore, the views expressed in it must have had more influence in shaping the views and opinions of the Muslim populace than other works.

Here it seems useful to explore the views expressed in the classical Sufī texts which the Chishtī Sufis recommended as text books to their disciples, which must have helped shape or further reinforce the Chishtī ideals. For instance, '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, written by Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234) in the thirteenth-century, was widely read in the Chishtī circles and considered as a handbook or instruction manual on the theory and practice of Sufism. It was prescribed by the early Chishtīs in India to govern the code of conduct of their disciples. It is significant to point out that the work is silent regarding matters of state and politics, but elaborates the virtue of *faqr*.¹⁹¹ However, another Suhrawardī text, *Ādāb al-Murīdīn* written by Shihāb al-Dīn's uncle, Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Abū 'l-Qāhir al-Suhrawardī (d. 1167), the founder of the Suhrawardī *Silsilah*, was not recommended to the disciples. It is worthy of mention

¹⁹⁰ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, pp. 258-59; for a detailed study, see pp. 234-38.

¹⁹¹ Al-Suhrawardī, '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, pp. 165-67.

that the work states that the Sufis are permitted to join government service on certain conditions.¹⁹²

Another popular and widely read treatise in Chishtī circles was *Kashf al-Mahjūb* by ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Hujwīrī, written in the eleventh-century. Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’ used to say about it: “For one who has no spiritual guide, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* is enough.”¹⁹³ The work throws some light on the attitude of the early Sufis towards state and government. It contains a number of references of early Sufis, including Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, Fuḍayl ibn ‘Ayāḍ and Dā’wd al-Ṭā’i, who did not allow, or hesitated in allowing, the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs from visiting them, and rejected offerings from them and their associates. (It has already been highlighted in the first chapter of the study) These works must have shaped the Chishtī attitude towards the state and the Sultans of Delhi.

Concerning the “ethical relations” of the Chishtī Shaykhs to institutional power, Ernst and Lawrence observe: “For the Chishtis, unlike other Sufis, avoidance of the sultan meant avoiding the corruption of the soul by earthly power, which contrasted with the destruction of the soul by divine power, the goal of the Chishti way.”¹⁹⁴ The Chishtīs did not want to fetter the independence of their soul by becoming subservient to the state or political authorities.

¹⁹² It states that the Sufis are only conditionally permitted to join government service, with the intention that they would protect the people from the atrocities of government officials and help redress the grievances of the aggrieved. See details in Saiyyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Gēsūdirāz, *Khātimah (Tarjumah-i Ādāb al-Murīdīn)*, Urdu trans. Saiyyid Yāsīn ‘Alī Niẓāmī (Lahore: Al-Kitāb, 1977), pp. 36-37.

¹⁹³ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. II, art. *Cishtiyya* by Nizami, p. 55.

¹⁹⁴ Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 4.

As for the cash offerings or *futūḥ* from the Sultans of Delhi, *umarā'* and high state officials, the early Chishtī Sufis did not accept them as a rule. The rejection of *futūḥ* by Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn and Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn being the cases in point. The one exceptional case is when Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn went to the court of Iletmish for getting an authorization letter of land for his preceptor, Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn, he accepted the cash offering from Sultan Iletmish for the Khwājah. As pointed out above, the Shaykh had accepted it as a trust, and it was difficult to reject it while accepting the authorization letter.

It is also significant to note that the early Chishtīs never personally consumed a single *tankah* from the *futūḥ*. They used to distribute the large sums of cash among the needy and the poor, who flocked around them for financial help. Owing to scarcity of resources as well as economic disparities, large sections of population, including the Muslims and the Hindus, lived in abject poverty. The Chishtī Sufis tried to alleviate the sufferings and miseries of the people by extending financial help to them, in addition to other forms of assistance.

As a result of the Chishtī principle of distancing from the state, the early Chishtīs in the Sultanate of Delhi were able to carve a space of their own, independent from state control or interference. Consequently, their *khānqāhs* also enjoyed autonomy and independence from political interference. It seems important to recall here that the early Sufī dwellings on the Indian coasts were independent from any political control, since they were not supported by any state, as pointed out in chapter one. These Sufī lodges

might have been supported or liberally endowed by the Arab traders, who used to visit these areas for commercial purposes. Similarly, in Persia (Iranian regions) there were *khānqāhs* that were not supported by the state.¹⁹⁵ These *khānqāhs* remained independent of any interference from the rulers or the state. The early Chishtīs, who lived in Persia, must have been acquainted with, and even influenced by, the Persian traditions of Sufis' detachment from state and politics. Moreover, Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn had widely traveled in the Muslim world before coming to India. They must have been acquainted with the varied patterns of the Sufis' relationship with the political authorities prevalent in other parts of the Muslim world, including the Sufi engagement with the rulers, and must have observed their repercussions as well.

3.5 The Chishtī Sufis and the 'Ulamā'

The relations of the Sultans of Delhi with the 'ulamā' were generally 'close and harmonious',¹⁹⁶ and there was a symbiotic relationship between the political and religious authorities, the latter being represented by the 'ulamā'. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, in the Sultanate, the 'ulamā' as the custodians of religious authority exercised considerable influence over the Sultans and state policies. Nonetheless, the 'ulamā' did not enjoy an exclusive monopoly over religious affairs, as the Sufis seem to have challenged the religious authority of the 'ulamā'. Therefore, in addition to the doctrinal differences, there existed friction between the Sufis and the 'ulamā', particularly those who held official positions, pertaining to the question of religious authority.

¹⁹⁵ Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁹⁶ Hardy, "Part IV: Islam in Medieval India", in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, ed. Embree, p. 389.

Khwājah Mu‘in al-Dīn tried to avert any friction between the Chishtī Sufis and the ‘*ulamā*’ holding official positions. It can be inferred from the following incident narrated by Amīr Khūrd and Jamālī: The presence of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī in Delhi had become an eye sore to some ‘*ulamā*’, who were serving the state. Among them, the most notable was Najm al-Dīn Ṣuġhrā, the *Shaykh al-Islām* of Delhi, who had cordial relations with Khwājah Mu‘in al-Dīn Chishtī. The most obvious reason for the attitude of Najm al-Dīn towards Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn was that the populace of Delhi was greatly attracted towards the latter. When Khwājah Mu‘in al-Dīn visited Delhi, Najm al-Dīn complained that Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, his *khalīfah* in Delhi, did not understand the implications of his official position. Upon hearing this, the Khwājah smiled and said to him: “Do not worry. I will take Bābā Quṭb al-Dīn away with me.” He decided to take his *khalīfah* along with him to Ajmer, and communicated the same to the latter, who at once submitted to his preceptor. Together when they set out for Ajmer, the populace of Delhi and Sultan Iletmish set out after them, as they all were quite disturbed and distressed by the Shaykh’s departure. Upon seeing the signs of distress among the people, the Khwājah ordered his *khalīfah* to stay in Delhi. He said: “Bābā Bakhtiyār, make this your place because the people are so sorely distressed at your departing. I do not wish to cause so much misery and heartbreak.” Therefore, the Khwājah left for Ajmer alone, and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn continued to live in Delhi.¹⁹⁷

Being the *Shaykh al-Islām* at the capital, Najm al-Dīn not only took interest in politics, he also took active part in it. The growing popularity and esteem of Shaykh Quṭb

¹⁹⁷ For details see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, pp. 54-55, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, pp. 21-22.

al-Dīn among the populace of Delhi made Najm al-Dīn jealous of the former, as the latter's own religious authority in the capital was being undermined and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn had emerged as an alternative locus of religious authority in the capital. In fact, Najm al-Dīn was jealous of all such religious dignitaries who were popular among the people as well as esteemed by the Sultan and the *umarā'*. He used to poison the ears of the Sultan against all such people. The same Najm al-Dīn had even tried to defame Suhrawardī Sufī Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī as well, by leveling the charges of adultery against him. However, when the charges were found false and the plot prepared by Najm al-Dīn was unearthed, he was dismissed from the official position then and there by Sultan Iletmish.¹⁹⁸ This incident speaks volumes of the growing jealousy and hostility of the '*ulamā'*' associated with the state, towards the Sufis of various *silsilahs*, whom the former perceived as rival claimants to or share-holders in their religious authority. The Sufis had somewhat eroded the influence of the '*ulamā'*', particularly those who were closely allied with the state, among the people. However, it is important to note that the Chishtī Sufis never hankered for popularity and fame among the people. In fact, on many occasions, they even tried to avoid it.¹⁹⁹

The hostility of the '*ulamā'*' towards the Sufis, including the Chishtīs, is clearly evident from the case of Najm al-Dīn Ṣuḡhrā. However, the attitude of the '*ulamā'*' regarding the Sufis cannot be generalized from a single incident. Among the ranks of '*ulamā'*' associated with the state, there were defenders of Sufism, and supporters of Sufī

¹⁹⁸ For a detailed account of the incident, see Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 166-68.

¹⁹⁹ For instance, Jamālī records that while traveling in Central Asia, Persia and Iraq, wherever Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn went, he preferred to stay in graveyards, and whenever he used to get little popularity among the people in a town, he used to leave that place. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

practices like *samā'* as well. One such example is Minhāj al-Sirāj Juzjānī, the author of *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, who himself had inclination towards Sufism, and had a profound interest in *samā'*.²⁰⁰ He was the Chief *Qāḍī* of the Sultanate under Sultan Iletmish. In those days, *samā'* gatherings were held in the Chishtī *khānqāh* in Delhi. The Chishtī Sufis sought ecstatic inspiration in *samā'*, and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī is said to have died in a state of ecstasy or intoxication (*sukr*) while attending a *samā'* gathering.²⁰¹ Moreover, Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn's *khalīfah*, Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī, had written a treatise in Persian titled *Risālah-'i Samā'* in defense of *samā'*.²⁰² But many '*ulamā'*' were critical of this practice, and had raised objections to it. It seems that the Chishtī practice of *samā'* had become a bone of contention between the Sufis and the '*ulamā'*'. Nevertheless, it was due to Qāḍī Juzjānī, that despite objections from the '*ulamā'*', the *samā'* gatherings of the Chishtīs were permitted in Delhi. It is said that he had legalized the institution of *samā'* in Delhi during his *qaḍāship*.²⁰³ However, despite that, the opponents of *samā'* kept on criticizing it as well as making efforts to curb it.

According to *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, once a *samā'* gathering was organized in Delhi at the residence of a person, where both Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and his close friend Shaykh Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī Suhrawardī²⁰⁴ were invited.²⁰⁵ Though Qāḍī

²⁰⁰ For Juzjānī's participation in *samā'*, see Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 322.

²⁰¹ For details see *ibid.*, pp. 246-47, Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 541-42, Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 28-29, and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, pp. 31-32. Many eminent Sufī Shaykhs of the past, such as Shaykh Dhū al-Nūn Miṣrī, Shaykh Abū Bakr Shiblī, and Shaykh Rūzbihān Bāqlī Shīrāzī, had also died in a state of ecstasy caused by *samā'*. Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 43.

²⁰² For a brief discussion on the treatise, see Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, pp. 37-38.

²⁰³ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 407.

²⁰⁴ Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn is not to be confused with the Chishtī Sufi Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī, who also lived in Nāgaur. He originally belonged to Bukhara, but migrated to India. He was appointed as the *qaḍī* of Nāgaur, but later given up the post, and entered the discipleship of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī. Later, he was appointed as the *khalīfah* or the spiritual successor of Shaykh Shihāb al-

Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī belonged to the Suhrawardī *Silsilah* and was a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, he was also granted *khilāfat* by Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī as well.²⁰⁶ When Mawlānā Rukn al-Dīn Samarqandī, a vehement critic of *samā‘*, came to know about the gathering, he decided to go there and disrupt it. Nevertheless, Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī came to know about it before hand, and he asked the owner of the house to hide himself, as in his absence and without his permission, Mawlānā Rukn al-Dīn and his supporters could not enter the house and disrupt the gathering. Then the Qāḍī ordered the door of the house to be opened and *samā‘* to be commenced. When Mawlānā Rukn al-Dīn and his supporters came, they asked for the owner of the house, and when he was not found, they returned disappointed.²⁰⁷ The incident clearly shows that the ‘*ulamā‘*’, who were opposed to *samā‘*, made compelling attempts to forcefully prevent the holding of *samā‘* gatherings. *Gulzār-i Abrār* informs that in those days, the anti-*samā‘* ‘*ulamā‘*’ had also prepared a *fatwa* against the Chishtī practice of *samā‘*. The *fatwā* was validated and signed by many ‘*ulamā‘*’.²⁰⁸

The attitude of the ‘*ulamā‘*’ associated with the state towards the Sufīs can be assessed well from an incident cited in *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*. According to ‘Iṣāmī, two *muftīs*

Dīn. For a biographical sketch, see Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, pp. 146-54, and ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, pp. 43-50.

²⁰⁵ According to Rizvi, under the influence of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn had developed profound interest in *samā‘*. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism*, vol. 1, p. 196. However, according to Aslam, under the influence of Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn had developed interest in *samā‘*. Muḥammad Aslam, “*Salāṭīn-i Dehlī wa Shāhān-i Mughliyyah kā Dhauq-i Mawsīqī*,” *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society*, Lahore: Department of History, University of the Punjab, vol. XXIV, no. 3 (Oct. 1992-Nov. 1992), p. 9. They both used to attend *samā‘* gatherings together. For instance, see Iṣhāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā‘* in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 8-9.

²⁰⁶ Sharib, *Khawaja Gharib Nawaz*, p. 84.

²⁰⁷ Sijzī, *Fawā‘id al-Fu‘ād*, pp. 407-8, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 148.

²⁰⁸ Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, pp. 47-48. The *fatwa* was also signed by Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Dā‘wd, who was a close friend of Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn. Later, when the Qāḍī inquired about it from Shaykh Jamāl, the latter repented his action.

named Qāḍī Sa'ad and Qāḍī 'Imād objected to the *samā'* gatherings of Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī in Delhi, who had come to Delhi from Nāgaur. These *qāḍīs* requested Sultan Iletmish to convene a gathering of '*ulamā'* to determine the legality of *samā'*. What these *qāḍīs* said to the Sultan is worth-citing:

O King, you are a zealous supporter and protector of the faith. Since God has given you power and made you king, you should summon this man [Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn to the court]. When he arrives here, you should not stand up and rise from the royal throne [in respect]. Then, ask him to sit by your side. After it, we shall cite three or four quotations from the Holy Book and the sayings of the Prophet, forbidding music. When he is completely subdued in debate, he will not dare to say anything. He will be compelled to take an oath of abstention from music in future, which will curb his intoxication of love of God.²⁰⁹

These words clearly reveal that the *qāḍīs* wanted to dishonor and humiliate the Shaykh, and make the Sufis subordinate to the political authorities. Next morning, the Sultan summoned Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn. As soon as the Shaykh entered the royal court, the Sultan descended from the throne and hastened to receive him. The Shaykh was received with great honour and offered a seat by the side of the Sultan. Iletmish also kissed the hands of the Shaykh several times and apologized for having summoned him. When the Shaykh was asked about the ruling of the *Shari'ah* about *samā'*, he replied: "Who is the listener? We must find out first. Verily it is forbidden if the listener is *ahl-i qāl* (externalist scholar). It is permissible if the listener is a man of the path." Then the Shaykh recalled a story before the Sultan about his (Iletmish's) childhood, when in a *samā'* gathering of Sufis in Baghdad, he had spent the whole night in cutting off the burnt wicks of the candles with a pair of scissors without being asked by anyone. "That night",

²⁰⁹ 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 112-13. The incident is also recorded by Farishtah, but he mentions the name of the two *qāḍīs* as Mulla 'Imād al-Dīn and Mulla Jalāl al-Dīn. Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. 1, p. 253. Baranī refers to two *qāḍīs* bearing the similar names (Qāḍī Sa'ad and Qāḍī 'Imād) during the reign of Sultan Iletmish, but does not record the incident. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 550. Thus, the names provided by Farishtah seem to be incorrect.

the Shaykh recalled, “in recompense of this service, those men of piety gave you the kingdom of Hindustan.” Sultan Iletmish, recalling the incident and regretting, fell at the feet of the Shaykh and apologized. Later, the Sultan bade farewell to the Shaykh with honor.²¹⁰ According to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlevī (d. 1642), the author of *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, Qāḍī Juzjānī had supported the Shaykh in the debate.²¹¹

A number of questions have cast doubts on the historicity of the story. If Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn had come to Delhi from Nāgaur, and was a guest in the Chishtī *khānqāh*, the Chishtī Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn should have been summoned by the Sultan in the court, and not the guest? Since *samā’* gatherings were already being held in the Chishtī *khānqāh* in Delhi under Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, why the two *muftīs* had objected to the *samā’* gatherings of Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn? Rizvi has also expressed doubts about the story, and calls the account ‘anachronistic’,²¹² but has not raised questions in this regard. Nevertheless, these doubts are not enough to discredit or reject the account altogether. What can be gathered from the incident is that Sultan Iletmish, who enjoyed very cordial relations with Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn, could not resist the pressure of the ‘*ulamā’* who were critical of *samā’*, and apparently, had to unwillingly summon the Shaykh in his court for a debate on the issue. *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād* also mentions that many externalist ‘*ulamā’* were hostile to the Suhrawardī Shaykh Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn owing to his doctrines and practices. One such scholar was Mawlānā Sharaf al-Dīn, who was the *qāḍī* of the imperial forces.²¹³ Moreover, according to *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād* and *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, Qāḍī

²¹⁰ ‘Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 113-14.

²¹¹ ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, p. 44.

²¹² Rizvi, *A History of Sufism*, vol. 1, p. 196.

²¹³ For details see Sijzī, *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*, p. 408.

Ḥamīd al-Dīn was known for his indulgence in *samā'*, and that was why his opponents had even got the *fatwās* issued against him from the jurists and *muftīs*.²¹⁴

The author of *Gulzār-i Abrār* informs that Qāḍī Sa'ad and Qāḍī 'Imād were two famous critics of *samā'* in Delhi. Once they went to the *khānqāh* of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn to disrupt the *samā'* gathering, but they became so over-whelmed by *samā'* that they joined in *raqṣ* with other devotees, and then became the disciples of the Shaykh.²¹⁵

To conclude, the first three decades of the Sultanate was marked by the consolidation of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India as well as the Sultanate of Delhi. The attitude of the early Chishtī Sufis in the Sultanate was characterized by detachment from the court and political affairs in the Sultanate. Khwājah Mu'in al-Dīn and Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī avoided the company of the Sultans of Delhi, as they did not favour any contact with the political authorities. The latter overtly refused to accept any offerings from the high state officials. Though Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn seems to have cordial relationship with Sultan Iletmish, he never accepted the official title and land grants from the state. By these measures, they were able to carve an independent space for their *Silsilah* in the Sultanate of Delhi, free from the interference of the state for the unhindered practice of the Chishtī principles. In order to strengthen his authority, Sultan Iletmish sought the support of various social groups such as the Sufis and the '*ulamā'*'. Contrary to the Chishtī ideals and practices, the Suhrawardī Sufis extended support to the consolidation and strengthening of the rule of the Sultans of Delhi, and in lieu of it, they

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 409, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, p. 149.

²¹⁵ Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 43. Māndavī also counts the two *qāḍīs* in the list of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn's *khulafā'*.

enjoyed official positions and received land grants from the state as well. As for the ‘*ulamā*’, many of whom had accepted official designations in the Sultanate, some of them had developed hostility towards the Sufis, particularly the Chishtīs. Apparently, the bone of contention was the Chishtī practice of *samā*’, but, in addition to the doctrinal controversy, the religious authority of the ‘*ulamā*’ was perceived to be undermined by the growing popularity of the Chishtī Sufis among the people. Therefore, some of the ‘*ulamā*’ remained vehemently opposed to the Chishtī Sufis, though there were also exceptions like Qāḍī Juzjānī. As for the role of the Sultan in the ‘*ulamā*’-Sufi controversy, despite his unwillingness, Iletmish was compelled by the ‘*ulamā*’ to seek explanation of the practice of *samā*’ from the Sufis. Nonetheless, the Sultan tried to avert any conflictual situation between the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis, and seemed to have sympathies for the latter.

CHAPTER 4

Preservation and Expansion of the Space of the *Silsilah* in the Sultanate (1236-1325)

Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī, who introduced the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India, consolidated it together with his disciples. He also carved out a space for it in the Sultanate of Delhi free from interference of the state. During the first three decades after its formation, the Sultanate of Delhi also consolidated itself. Sultan Iltutmish was supported by the Suhrawardī Sufis of Multan and Uch in his bid to strengthen his authority and establish the writ of the Muslim state in northern India. The Sultan also tried to bring the Chishtī Sufis within the ambit of the state by offering official title and land grants to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, who lived in Delhi—the seat of the Sultanate. However, he declined to accept them in order to maintain a distance from the state and politics in pursuance of the early Chishtī traditions and doctrines.

Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī's principal successor, Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd, popularly known as Bābā Farīd, lived in the towns of Hānsī and Ajōdhan in the Punjab. He tried to preserve and expand the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* by dissemination of the Chishtī principles and more pronounced practice of these principles in the Sultanate of Delhi. Contrary to the practice of his preceptor, Bābā Farīd's principal *khalīfah*, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', lived in the vicinity of Delhi. Nonetheless, he

also carried on the traditions of his *Silsilah*. During his times, there were challenges from the state to the Chishtī leadership, but he also refused to compromise the principles of the *Silsilah*, and tried to guard and further expand that space, and thus, retain the independence of his *Silsilah* from the state and politics. Rather, the Chishtī stance towards the state and political authorities became more explicit and evidently manifest under him. The space of the *Silsilah* was preserved by the *khulafā'* of Bābā Farīd and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn.

The present chapter explores how Bābā Farīd and his eminent *khulafā'* including Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' preserved and expanded the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* carved out by their spiritual ancestors within the political confines of the Sultanate. The chapter is divided into two sections: section I focuses on Bābā Farīd and his notable *khulafā'*, whereas section II deals with Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā'.

Section I Bābā Farīd and the Preservation and Expansion of the Space of the *Silsilah*

Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd (b. 1175-d. 1265), titled *Ganj-i Shakar*, literally meaning the store of sugar, was popularly known as Bābā Farīd. He was Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī's most eminent disciple and his principal spiritual successor. He was born in 1175 in Kōṭhayvāl,¹ a town in the province of Multan, which was one of the oldest centres of Muslim learning in India. His father, Jamāl al-Dīn Sulaymān, was the

¹ For a brief discussion on the actual name of the town, see Muḥammad Aslam, "*Ḥaḍrat Bābā Farīd kā Ābā'i Waṭan*", *Al-Ma'ārif*, Lahore (July, 1983), and Idem, *Malḥūzātī Adab kī Tārikhī Ahammiyyat*, pp. 108-9.

qāḍī of the town, and a very learned and a scholarly person.² Bābā Farīd's mother, Bibī Qursum, was a deeply religious woman with fervent piety and Sufi proclivities, and it was her profound piety and God-consciousness which greatly influenced Bābā Farīd in his early age.³ At eighteen, he left his native town and settled in Multan, which was one of the oldest centres of Muslim learning in India in those days. There he met Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, who took him to Delhi, where Bābā Farīd performed *bay'at* at his hands, and thus, formally entered his discipleship in a public gathering.⁴ Later, he visited Delhi where he met Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn as well, who was greatly impressed by his devotion and austerity.

In Delhi, Bābā Farīd became quite popular among its populace. According to *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, after the Friday prayer people used to come and kiss his hands in great numbers.⁵ However, having a meditative and contemplative temperament, Bābā Farīd preferred obscurity to fame, and always disliked show of veneration by the people. When people flocked to him in Delhi to seek his blessings in great numbers, it started disturbing his strenuous personal routine of meditation, worship and prayers. Thus, he sought permission from his preceptor to leave the place and go to Hānsī,⁶ a small town in District Ḥiṣār (Punjab), which lay on a main route between Multan and Delhi. Having been granted the permission, he settled at Hānsī, and lived there for the next nineteen or

² Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 31.

³ For some details about her, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 88, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 31.

⁴ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 60-61. However, according to Jamālī, Bābā Farīd performed *bay'at* at the hands of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn during their first meeting in Multan. Idem, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 35.

⁵ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 247-48.

⁶ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 36.

twenty years. Before his death, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī nominated him as his principal successor. After the demise of his preceptor, he came to Delhi once again, and stayed there for less than a week, and then left for Hānsī.⁷ According to Nizami, Bābā Farīd did not like to enter into an unseemly competition or rivalry with Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ghaznavī (d. 1259), a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, who had spent years in Delhi in the company of his preceptor, and had been greatly disappointed when the latter had nominated Bābā Farīd as his spiritual successor.⁸ Therefore, Bābā Farīd did not stay in Delhi for long, and soon returned to Hānsī.

In a remote place like Hānsī, his reputation as the leader of the Chishtī *Silsilah* spread far and wide, and people started coming to see him from far off places. Thus, he left Hānsī and moved to Ajōdhan⁹ (known since the sixteenth century as Pākpatan, literally meaning ‘the holy ferry’, in honpou of Bābā Farīd’s memory), another small town in the Punjab, where he lived till his last breath. Situated on the main route between Multan and Delhi, like Hānsī, Ajōdhan was surrounded by desert from all sides. Moreover, its inhabitants were ill-tempered and insolent. The choice of such a place in both geographical and social terms, speaks well of the Shaykh’s resolve to endure adversity. So unlike his preceptor, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, Bābā Farīd lived

⁷ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 62, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, pp. 31-32.

⁸ K. A. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar* (Aligarh: Muslim University, 1955), pp. 33, 34. However, according to hagiographical sources, when Bābā Farīd came to Delhi immediately after the demise of his preceptor, and became his principal successor, Sarhangā, a resident of his native town of Hānsī came to see him in Delhi, but he was not allowed access to the Shaykh for three days by an attendant of the *jamā’atkhānah*. When Bābā Farīd came out of the *jamā’atkhānah*, Sarhangā came and told him that when he (Bābā Farīd) was in Hānsī, it was easier for the former to see the Shaykh, which had then become quite difficult in Delhi. Upon hearing this, Bābā Farīd immediately decided to leave for Hānsī. Ishāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā’* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 91, Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 73, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 33.

⁹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 63-64, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 31. For details see, Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar*, pp. 32-36.

in a less populated place instead of in a metropolitan urban environment, for he despised being treated like a celebrity by the people. Bābā Farīd passed away in Ajōdhan in 1265 at the age of ninety-three years,¹⁰ one year before the accession of Ulugh Khān Balban to the throne of Delhi.

Like his preceptors, the compilation of a *malfūz* is attributed to Bābā Farīd as well. *Fawā'id al-Sālikīn* is believed by some to be the *malfūz* of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī compiled by Bābā Farīd. Nevertheless, like many other early Chishtī *malfūzāt*, it is also considered to be an apocryphal work.¹¹ Similarly, two *malfūzāt* of Bābā Farīd are said to be compiled by his disciples: *Rāḥat al-Qulūb* is attributed to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā',¹² whereas Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq (d. 1291) is credited with the compilation of *Asrār al-Awliyā'*.¹³ As pointed out earlier, Saiyyid Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, 'Allāmah Akhlāq Ḥusayn Dehlavī and I. A. Zilli maintain that these

¹⁰ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 89. However, according to Amīr Khūrd, Bābā Farīd passed away at the age of ninety-five. Idem, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 91.

¹¹ Regarding the issue of the authenticity of the *malfūz*, see chap. 3, note 75 (supra).

¹² Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', *Rāḥat al-Qulūb* in *Hasht Bahisht*. The work is not to be confused with another work bearing the same title. Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlavī, *Rāḥat al-Qulūb ya'nī Jadhb al-Qulūb ilā Diyār al-Maḥbūb*, Urdu trans. Mawlawī Ḥājī Ḥakīm 'Irfān 'Alī Barēlvī (Badāyūn: Nizāmī Press, 1935).

¹³ Ishāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā'* in *Hasht Bahisht*. The work has some inconsistencies, which reveal that either it was a later day fabrication, or was largely distorted later on. For instance, it informs us about the meeting of Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd with Bābā Farīd, (p. 90) which is historically untrue. According to another account in it, the Chauhān ruler of Ajmer, Rā'ē Pithūrā, had a Muslim employee, who wanted to become a disciple of Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn, but the Khwājah refused to enter him in the fold of his discipleship. Thereupon, the employee requested Rā'ē Pithūrā to intercede on his behalf. The Rā'ē sent his men to the Khwājah with the request, but even then Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn did not make the Rā'ē's employee his disciple. p. 85. First, it seems improbable that the Rā'ē, who was offended by the presence of the Khwājah in his dominions, had sent his men to the Khwājah. Moreover, this account is contradicted by other sources, which inform that the employee, who was a devotee of the Khwājah, was molested by the Rā'ē, and it was the Khwājah, who had requested the Rā'ē to treat him kindly. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 46.

works are authentic, but according to many other scholars of Indian Sufism, the authenticity of both these works is dubious.¹⁴

In addition, a *dīwān* is also attributed to Bābā Farīd, the authenticity of which is doubtful like the above-mentioned compilations. Some maintain that he wrote poetry in Urdu¹⁵ and Punjabi,¹⁶ besides Persian, in order to disseminate the teachings of Sufism through popular songs. These songs later took the form of work songs sung by women in the villages of Punjab while performing their domestic chores. His poetry, composed in local dialect, is believed to have commanded tremendous influence among local population. Some of Bābā Farīd's Punjabi hymns or *shalōks* are also believed to be incorporated in the *Adī Granth*,¹⁷ the sacred scripture of Sikhs, by Gurū Arjan (b. 1563-d. 1606). Nonetheless, some scholars and linguists argue that the compositions attributed to Bābā Farīd were, in fact, composed by his descendant Shaykh Ibrāhīm Farīd II¹⁸ (b. 1450-d. 1554).¹⁹ Taking a middle position, some scholars have asserted that Bābā Farīd must

¹⁴ See discussion in chap. 3, pp. 215-16 (supra).

¹⁵ For extracts of Bābā Farīd's poetry in Urdu language, see Rajendra Sarup Bhatnagar, *Mysticism in Urdu Poetry* (New Delhi: Department of Islamic Studies, Jāmi'ah Hamdard, 1995), pp. 16-17.

¹⁶ For instance, see Mas'ūd Ḥasan Shihāb, *Khittah-'i Pāk Uch* (Bahawalpur: Urdu Academy, 1967), Maqbool Elahī, *Couplets of Baba Farid* (Lahore: Majlis Shah Hussain, 1967), Najm Hosain Syed, *Recurrent Patterns in Punjabi Poetry*, chap. 1, *Austere Rhythms of Farid* (Lahore: Majlis Shah Hussain, 1968), and Muḥammad Āṣif Khān, *Ākhiyā Bābā Farīd nē*, (Punjabi) (Lahore: Pakistan Punjābī Adabī Board, 1978).

¹⁷ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, vol. I, 1469-1839 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 319.

¹⁸ For a brief biographical sketch of Farīd Thānī, see N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis (South Asia)* (New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2000), pp. 102-08.

¹⁹ For instance, see Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Life of Shaikh Farid I, and the Compositions of Shaikh Farid II, contained in the Granth Sahib of the Sikhs* (Lahore: Artistic Printing Works, 1903), Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, vol. V (Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1963 rpt.), Lajwanti Rama Krishna, *Punjabi Sufi Poets A.D. 1460-1900* (Karachi: Indus Publications, 1977 rpt., first published 1938), see chap. 1, pp. 1-11, Wahīd Aḥmad Mas'ūd, *Sawānih-i Ḥaḍrat Bābā Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd Ganj-i Shakar* (Karachi: Pāk Academy, 1961), and Saiyyid Muslim Niẓāmī Dehlavī, *Anwār al-Farīd* (Pākpattan Sharif: privately printed, 1965).

have composed some poetry in local languages including Punjabi.²⁰ In short, it seems difficult to altogether deny that Bābā Farīd composed poetry in local languages.

Before we turn to the discussion and analysis of how Bābā Farīd helped preserve and expand the space, which was carved out for the Chishtī *Silsilah* by his preceptors in the Sultanate of Delhi, it seems pertinent to place his teachings and dealings with the contemporary Sultans in an appropriate historical and political context.

4.1 Bābā Farīd's Contemporary State and Politics

After the demise of Iletmish in 1236, the *umarā'* set aside the will of the deceased Sultan by not allowing his daughter Raḍiyyah to ascend the throne, and instead placed Iletmish's son, Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz, on the throne of Delhi. Being completely engrossed in pleasure-seeking, he ruled the Sultanate for a little less than seven months, and was replaced by Iletmish's daughter, Sultana Raḍiyyah (r. 1236-40) the same year. She was the only queen to sit on the throne of Delhi. In fact, the Turkish women enjoyed greater freedom as compared to those living in other parts of the Muslim world.²¹ Here it seems useful to explore and compare the views of the people in general, the '*ulamā'*' and the ruling elite with those of the Chishtī Sufis regarding the place of women in society in particular.

²⁰ Jafar Qasimi, *Baba Fariduddin Masud Ganj-i-Shakar* (Lahore: R. C. D. Regional Cultural Institute, 1971), p. 45.

²¹ Jackson informs about other precedents of women rulers in that era: In 1250, Shajarat al-Durr, the wife of late Sultan al-Šāliḥ Ayyūb, was proclaimed Sultan of Egypt after the death of the Sultan's son and successor. In the twelfth century, princesses ruled over the Qarā-Khitān Empire in Turkistan, while Terken Khatūn, the mother of Khwārizmshāh Muḥammad, ruled Khwārizm till the Mongol invasion in 1221. Jackson, "Sultān Raḍiyya Bint Iltutmish" in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World*, ed. Hambly, pp. 181, 189-90.

In the patriarchal Muslim society in India, the status of women during the Sultanate period was very low. The perception of the ruling elite regarding women in the Muslim society can be well-assessed from the comments of Minhāj al-Sirāj Juzjānī, who writes that Sultana Raḍiyyah was “intelligent and just, merciful and benefactor of the world... She was endowed with all the worthy attributes and qualifications necessary for kings; but since fate did not favour her to be computed among men, of what advantage were all these excellent qualifications unto her?”²² ‘Iṣāmī and Farishtah also express similar views regarding women in general while discussing Raḍiyyah’s accession.²³ In those times, the Muslim women living in urban areas lived in almost complete seclusion. *Pardah* (veil) and the seclusion of women were the hallmarks of the Muslim ruling elite or the *ashraf*. They were denied any noticeable role in public life.²⁴

However, the Chishtī Sufis did not seem to have shared these prevalent views regarding the place and status of women in society, which is clearly evident from the hagiographical literature. Khwājah ‘Uthmān Hārwanī, for instance, regarded daughters as a blessing of God. In his so-called *malfūz*, *Anīs al-Arwāḥ*, he is recorded to have said that anyone who treats his daughters well, God and His Prophet (PBUH) are pleased with him. He also urged the participants of his *majlis* to celebrate the birth of a girl child, and also cited a *ḥadīth* guaranteeing salvation to the father of a daughter. He also told them that the Prophets and *Awliyā’* loved their daughters more than their sons.²⁵ It is important to bear in mind that female infanticide was prevalent among the Hindus in some parts of

²² Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāsiri*, p. 95.

²³ ‘Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭin*, p. 129, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. 1, p. 257.

²⁴ For a brief survey on the status of women during the Sultanate period, see Bakhshish Singh Nijjar, *Panjab under the Sultans (1000-1526 A.D.)* (Lahore: Book Traders, 1979), pp. 144-47.

²⁵ Mu‘īn al-Dīn, *Anīs al-Arwāḥ* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 22.

India, whereas the birth of a girl child was generally not celebrated in the Muslim families. Even if the so-called *malfūz* is apocryphal, and its authorship dubious, it is likely to be the work of either some latter-day Chishtī Sufi or one of their adherents or devotees. The views expressed in it betray the consciousness of the fact in the Chishtī circles that women were generally maltreated and oppressed in the society, and therefore, the Khwājah's utterance seems to be a conscious effort to ameliorate the conditions of the womenfolk. In the same *malfūz*, Khwājah 'Uthmān is alleged to have directly heard from Khwājah Mawdūd Chishtī that God showers His blessings on three types of people, including those who treat their wives well.²⁶ The *malfūz*, clearly being a fabrication, as Khwājah 'Uthmān and Khwājah Mawdūd lived almost a century apart, nevertheless, reflects the perception about, and the sensitivity of, the gender issue in the Chishtī circles.

Moreover, in those days, Sufism was one of the few spheres of social activity where women could also excel like men.²⁷ Bibī Ḥāfiẓ Jamāl, the daughter of Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī, and the wife of Shaykh Raḍī al-Dīn alias 'Abd Allāh, son of Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī, was known for her piety and God-consciousness. Her tomb is situated near the tomb of her father in Ajmer, and is visited and venerated by people.²⁸

Similarly, Bibī Khadijah, the wife of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī, was also a deeply

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

²⁷ Writing on the problems of ambiguity and sensitivity of the issue of gender in Sufi hagiography, Ernst observes: "... it is a fact that women have had an important spiritual role in the Islamic tradition, and this is almost completely unknown to most outsiders." Carl W. Ernst, *Teachings of Sufism, (Selection and Translation)* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1999), p. 179. For a discussion on Sufi women in early Islam, see Ignaz Goldziher, "The Veneration of Saints in Islam", in *Muhammadanische Studien* [1889], trans. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern, *Muslim Studies*, 2 vols., ed. S. M. Stern (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971), pp. 270-9. See also Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Appendix 2, "The Feminine Element in Sufism", pp. 426-35, and Saadia Khawar Khan Chishtī, "Female Spirituality in Islam," in *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Spirituality*, ed. Nasr, vol. I, *Foundations*, pp. 199-219.

²⁸ For details see Sharib, *Khawaja Gharib Nawaz*, p. 74.

religious woman, who shared an extremely austere and ascetic lifestyle with her husband in a small town of Suwāl. Jamālī calls her Rābi‘ah of her times.²⁹

It is important to point out that Bābā Farīd, who was not happy with his sons, used to say: “Had the succession of spiritual affairs allowed to be granted to women, I would have appointed my daughter Bībī Sharīfah as my *khalīfah*. Had there been some more women like her, women would have been granted a superior status than men.”³⁰ It is interesting to recall here that both Bābā Farīd and Sultan Iletmish seem to think on the same lines, as the Sultan was also not happy with his sons, and had, therefore, nominated his daughter, Raḍiyyah, as his successor.

It is also pertinent to point out here that in the *jamā‘ atkhānah* of Bābā Farīd, a woman named Bībī Rānī, who was the paternal grandmother of Amīr Khūrd and a disciple of Bābā Farīd, used to serve its inmates.³¹ Moreover, women could freely come to the Chishtī Sufīs for performing *bay‘at* and for seeking their guidance, blessings or favours. Irrespective of their gender, these Sufīs treated all the devotees kindly and sympathetically. It vividly shows that the Sufīs were not as rigid as the ‘*ulamā*’ and the aristocratic sections of the society as far as the seclusion and segregation of women was concerned. One comes across references in praise of Bībī ‘Amah of Andrapat, Bībī Fāṭimah Sām of Andrapat,³² and Rābi‘ah of Baṣrah in *Fawā‘id al-Fu‘ād*.³³ Shaykh

²⁹ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Arīfīn*, p. 12.

³⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 191.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 108; see details on pp. 208-9.

³² For a brief note on Bībī Fāṭimah Sām, see ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, pp. 301-2. See also K. A. Nizāmī, *Ḥaḍrat Bībī Fāṭimah Sām* (Delhi: Idārah-‘i Adabiyāt-i Dellī, 1982).

³³ Sijzī, *Fawā‘id al-Fu‘ād*, pp. 35, 318, 416-18.

Nizām al-Dīn had once said: “When a lion comes out of a forest, nobody asks whether the lion is male or female. A person, be a man or a woman, should strive for obedience and piety.”³⁴ In short, the Chishtī views regarding women were comparatively different from, though not radically opposed to, the ideas of the ruling elite. The Chishtīs accorded comparatively a higher status to women, and allowed them to play a more active role in public life.³⁵

Coming back to the politics in the times of Bābā Farīd, Sultana Raḍiyyah was succeeded by her brother, Sultan Bahrām Shāh (r. 1240-42), who had completely given himself to pleasure and merry-making.³⁶ He was soon deposed by the *umarā'*, and replaced by Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd Shāh (r. 1242-46), a grandson of Sultan Iletmish. Nevertheless, on account of his ruthlessness, cruelty and tyranny, he was also deposed like the earlier Sultan.³⁷ During these years, Bābā Farīd remained completely aloof from political affairs in the Sultanate. Beside other reasons, it was owing to the politically confused situation in Delhi, that Bābā Farīd left the capital and settled in Hānsī, and later, after the demise of his preceptor, in Ajōdhan.³⁸ He did not cherish any political ambition, and tried to eliminate all possibilities of friction with the political authorities, as well as with the '*ulamā'*', particularly those associated with the court.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

³⁵ However, the Chishtī views regarding women cannot be judged according to the modern day standards of women emancipation and gender equity.

³⁶ 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, p. 132.

³⁷ For details, see Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, pp. 106-9, and 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 138-39.

³⁸ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 346.

During the last two decades of Bābā Farīd's life, the ruler of Delhi was Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd (r. 1246-66), who was a son of Iletmish. According to many contemporary and near contemporary historians, he had a profound religious orientation.³⁹ During the last years of his reign, the affairs of the Sultanate were managed by his *nā'ib-i mamlakat* (deputy-Sultan) Ulugh Khān Balban (who later became Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban). Ulugh Khān Balban, who happened to be the Sultan's father-in-law as well, had concentrated considerable powers in his hands, and acted virtually as a *de facto* ruler of the Sultanate.⁴⁰ Once he came to pay homage to Bābā Farīd in Ajōdhan as well, which will be discussed later in detail. Since Balban was favourably disposed towards the Shaykh, the opponents of the former developed hostility towards the Shaykh. Shēr Khān, the warden of the marches and the governor of Multan, was an arch-enemy of Balban, who happened to be his cousin as well. Moreover, Bābā Farīd commanded immense respect and devotion of the people at large, including the soldiers, who also visited him.⁴¹ Shēr Khān might have developed some jealousy of Bābā Farīd for this reason as well.

According to *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, Shēr Khān developed some grudge against Bābā Farīd, and he used to speak ill about him as well.⁴² Being a high state official, he must have created problems for Bābā Farīd and his disciples and devotees. According to Amīr

³⁹ Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, p. 115, Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 26, 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, p. 156, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. 1, p. 268. For a brief discussion and analysis, see also Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 141-45, and Iṣlāḥī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī aur Sharī'at-i Islāmiyyah*, p. 36.

⁴⁰ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 26.

⁴¹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 79.

⁴² Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 373-74. Once Bābā Farīd himself informed the participants of his *majlis* about the enmity of Shēr Khān. Iṣḥāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā'* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 77, and Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', *Rāḥat al-Qulūb* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 24.

Khūrd, during the last years of Bābā Farīd's life, the merchants and other wealthy and influential people, who supported Shēr Khān, stopped sending *futūḥ* to the *jamā'atkhānah* of Bābā Farīd. Consequently, the inmates of the *jamā'atkhānah* and the family of Bābā Farīd were reduced to near starvation.⁴³ It shows that though Bābā Farīd avoided political association, he could not remain unaffected by the politics of the contemporary court.

4.2 Distancing from the Court

As for the Chishtī tradition of distancing from the court, Bābā Farīd kept alive the traditions of independence and detachment from the state upheld by the earlier Shaykhs of his *Silsilah*. He witnessed the reign of many Sultans of Delhi but following in the footsteps of his preceptors, Bābā Farīd kept himself aloof from political affairs, avoided the company of kings and *umarā'*, and declined to accept government endowments. He shunned the pageantry of the imperial court at Delhi, as it was discordant with his contemplative disposition and austere lifestyle. Like his preceptor, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, who had turned down the official designation and title of *Shaykh al-Islām*, but was, nonetheless, addressed as, or referred to, by the same epithet by the people as *Shaykh al-Islām*, Bābā Farīd was also granted the same title by the common people.⁴⁴ It suggests that the people considered them to be deserving of these titles, which symbolized religious and spiritual authority in the Sultanate of Delhi.

⁴³ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 66.

⁴⁴ For instance, see Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. iv, v, vi (contents), Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 48, 49, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, p. 60.

4.2.1 Bābā Farīd's Attitude towards Political Authorities

According to Amīr Khūrd, Bābā Farīd used to advise his disciples: "If you desire to attain the position of great Sufis, do not pay any attention to the princes."⁴⁵ The so-called *malfūzāt* of Bābā Farīd, which need to be studied critically, throw considerable light on his views regarding the relationship of the Sufis with the political authorities. For instance, according to *Asrār al-Awliyā'*, while quoting Khwājah Junayd Baghdādī in his *majlis*, Bābā Farīd told the participants that the Khwājah used to say that in all religions, it is completely forbidden for *ahl al-taṣawwuf* (those treading the path of Sufisms) to meet worldly people and kings.⁴⁶ In the same *majlis*, Bābā Farīd stated that a person who does not abstain from consuming or acquiring unlawful sources or means of livelihood, and does not avoid the company of kings and *umarā'*, is not allowed to wear the *khirqah*.⁴⁷ Similarly, once Bābā Farīd narrated that a disciple (probably a *khalīfah*) of Khwājah Ajal Shīrāzī used to go to the kings and *umarā'* secretly, but when the Khwājah came to know about it, he expressed his displeasure and overtly expressed its disapproval.⁴⁸ An anecdote narrated by Bābā Farīd in *Asrār al-Awliyā'* informs that when the servants of the ruler of Tabrīz entered the house of Shaykh Abū Sa'īd Tabrīzī (the preceptor of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī), the Shaykh was so enraged that he ordered the soil to be dug up and thrown away where the servants had set their foot.⁴⁹ All these anecdotes and sayings of Bābā Farīd clearly show that he favoured no contact with the court and kings.

⁴⁵ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 75.

⁴⁶ Ishāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā'* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 53.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79. Cf. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 303-4, where the same incident is narrated by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'.

Amīr Khūrd has collected many aphorisms of Bābā Farīd, which throw light on his teachings regarding political power and wealth. Some of these aphorisms, which must have gone a long way in affecting the behaviour of his disciples and devotees, are hereunder:⁵⁰

Do not worry about position and wealth.
 Do not lower yourself in order to acquire a position.
 Do not forget religion in the company of state dignitaries.
 Entrust the government to the care of a God-fearing *wazīr*.

The last of these sayings must have been addressed to a king or a prince. Bābā Farīd might have advised Balban in these words. Bābā Farīd's admonition to Saiyyidī Muwallih is worthciting, as the Shaykh advised the latter: "Do not keep the company of kings and *umarā'*, and consider their visits to your *khānqāh* deadly to your spirit. A *dervish* who keeps company with the kings and *umarā'* is doomed."⁵¹ Similarly, Bābā Farīd's reply to Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ghaznavi is also worthy of mention: Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ghaznavi, a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, lived in Delhi. After the demise of his preceptor, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ghaznavi started spending most of the time in the company of the *umarā'* and the high state officials in Delhi.⁵² Malik Niẓām al-Dīn *Kharīṭahdār* (the treasurer) not only constructed a *khānqāh* for Shaykh Badr al-Dīn, he also offered to bear all the expenses of boarding and lodging of *darvĕshes*. The Shaykh accepted the offer in utter disregard of the traditions of his *Silsilah*. After some time, the Malik was charged with embezzlement. Worried, the Shaykh wrote to Bābā Farīd and requested him to pray for him and the release of the Malik. In reply, Bābā Farīd wrote to

⁵⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 76-77.

⁵¹ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 209.

⁵² Niẓāmī, *Tārīkh-i Mashā'ikh-i Chisht*, vol. 1, p. 210.

him: "He who does not follow the traditions and principles of his preceptors is confronted with such problems. It was not a tradition of our spiritual ancestors to live in such *khānqāhs*.⁵³ Consequently, due to Shaykh Badr al-Dīn's political association, the growth of the Chishtī *Silsilah* was retarded in Delhi.⁵⁴

The high state officials held Bābā Farīd in high esteem. For instance, the ruler of Ajōdhan greatly respected him.⁵⁵ Similarly, Malik Sharaf al-Dīn Kubrā, the *muq̄ta'* (chief officer of revenue grant) of Dīpālpur was also his devotee. Once the Malik came to Bābā Farīd to perform *bay'at* at his hands, and thus, become his disciple, but Bābā Farīd asked his *khalīfah*, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq, to accept the *muq̄ta'* in his discipleship.⁵⁶ Though there might be other reasons for not accepting the *muq̄ta'* as his disciple, the official position of Malik Sharaf al-Dīn appears to be an important factor behind it.

Bābā Farīd's views regarding the official designations of *qāḍī* or *muftī* can be well assessed from an incident narrated by Amīr Khūrd: once a class-fellow of Bābā Farīd came to see him in Ajōdhan, and requested him in an implicit manner to pray for his appointment as a *qāḍī* or *muftī*. Bābā Farīd's reply is quite suggestive of his attitude towards government service. He said to him that the real aim of acquiring knowledge of religion was to practice it, rather than creating troubles for people.⁵⁷ Bābā Farīd's adverse opinion about government-appointed *qāḍīs* and *muftīs* betrays that in the Sultanate of

⁵³ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 134-35, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 49-50.

⁵⁴ Nizāmī, *Tārīkh-i Mashā'ikh-i Chisht*, vol. 1, pp. 210-11, and Rizvī, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 138.

⁵⁵ See a detailed incident and the response of the ruler of Ajōdhan in Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 38-39.

⁵⁶ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 175.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Delhi, the trust of the people in the judicial apparatus of the state was somewhat deficient, as these state officials had become a source of injustice and coercion. However, one of the sons of Bābā Farīd, Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn, was in the service of Ulugh Khān Balban, and was appointed in the town of Patiali during the life-time of his father.⁵⁸ According to Nizami, Nizām al-Dīn was recruited in Ulugh Khān Balban's army.⁵⁹ Apparently, Bābā Farīd had not objected to it, as he lacked inclination towards Sufism.

4.2.2 Bābā Farīd's Alleged Relationship with Balban

According to some later day hagiographers and biographers of Bābā Farīd, one of his wives was the daughter of Sultan Balban. For instance, in *Jawāhir-i Farīdī*, 'Alī Aṣghar Chishtī (d. after 1623 circa) writes on the authority of *Gulshan-i Awliyā'* that Sultan Balban, after accession to the throne of Delhi, had married his daughter, Bībī Hazīrah, to Bābā Farīd.⁶⁰ Though 'Alī Aṣghar Chishtī is a seventeenth-century biographer of Bābā Farīd, and his statement has not been corroborated by any earlier source, this view has uncritically been accepted by some of the more recent hagiographers and biographers of Bābā Farīd such as Ghulām Sarwar,⁶¹ Shabbīr Nizāmī,⁶² Anṣar Ṣābirī.⁶³

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 90. However, Amīr Khūrd writes that he was in service of 'Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban', which is historically incorrect. In fact, during the life-time of Bābā Farīd, Balban was only deputy-Sultan, and had not yet assumed the title of Ghiyāth al-Dīn, which he adopted after his accession to the throne of Delhi in 1266.

⁵⁹ Nizāmī, *Tārīkh-i Mashā'ikh-i Chisht*, vol. 1, p. 224. Amīr Khūrd informs that he fell fighting against the Mongols in Ajōdhan. Idem, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 189-90. For details, see Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin*, pp. 63-64.

⁶⁰ 'Alī Aṣghar Chishtī, *Jawāhir-i Farīdī*, MS, Personal Collection of K. A. Nizami, as cited in Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar*, p. 103.

⁶¹ Sarwar, *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, vol. I, p. 301.

⁶² Shabbīr Ḥasan Chishtī Nizāmī, *Sawāniḥ-i Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakar* (Delhi: Farīd Book Depot, n.d.), pp. 30-33.

⁶³ To add to the confusion, another hagiographer, Anṣar Ṣābirī, has mistakenly written that one of the wives of Bābā Farīd was the daughter of Sultan Shams al-Dīn Iletmish. See biographical note on Bābā

'Alī Aṣghar Chishtī's statement has been rejected by scholars of Sufism such as K. A. Nizami,⁶⁴ Muslim Nizāmī,⁶⁵ Rizvi⁶⁶ and Aslam.⁶⁷ According to Aslam, both internal and external evidences contradict this assertion. The primary sources of the Sultanate and Mughal era, including the court chronicles as well as the hagiographical and biographical literature, have failed to record any such thing. Moreover, the assertion cannot be accepted for the following reasons: first, Bābā Farīd had died before Ulugh Khān Balban became the Sultan of Delhi, and if Balban had given his daughter in marriage to Bābā Farīd when he was the deputy-Sultan of Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, at that time Bābā Farīd was seventy-six years of age, while Balban was around forty. If we assume Balban's daughter to be of twenty years of age, in view of the age difference between her and Bābā Farīd it is difficult to believe that she was given in marriage to him. Secondly, according to contemporary evidence, Sultan Balban had two sons, Muḥammad and Bughrā Khān, and only one daughter, who was the wife of Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd. Thirdly, this alleged relationship between Balban and Bābā Farīd contradicts the latter's teachings regarding the relationship of the Sufis with the political authorities. Lastly, it seems improbable for a Sultan like Balban to give his daughter in marriage to Bābā Farīd, who lived an extremely austere and indigent life, while the

Farīd in *Hasht Bahisht*, Urdu trans. Anṣar Ṣābirī (Lahore 1996 ed.), p. 191. However, it must be borne in mind that one comes across historical fallacies in this work quite frequently.

⁶⁴ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin*, p. 103.

⁶⁵ Muslim Nizāmī argues that the details of the incident of Bābā Farīd's marriage show that it is an apocryphal account. See details in idem, *Anwār al-Farid*, pp. 319-22.

⁶⁶ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 144.

⁶⁷ Muḥammad Aslam, "Kiyā Sulṭān Balban kī kō'ī Bēti Bābā Farid al-Dīn Ganj-Shakar sē Mansūb thī?", *Tārīkhī Maqālāt* (Lahore: Nadwat al-Muṣannifin, 1970), pp. 9-31.

former believed in caste distinction and loved royal grandeur and splendor.⁶⁸ Therefore, it can safely be inferred that the relationship of Bābā Farīd and Sultan Balban was a later day assertion without having historical basis, and cannot be accepted as a historical verity.

4.2.3 Ulugh Khān Balban's Meeting with Bābā Farīd

It is recorded by some historians that Ulugh Khān Balban had cordial relations with Bābā Farīd and his sons. According to *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* and *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, once during a military expedition, Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd was encamped near Nēhrwālah (Anhilwara, Gujrat). He intended to see Bābā Farīd in Ajōdhan. At that time, Ulugh Khān Balban, the deputy-Sultan, had also accompanied the Sultan on the expedition. Since Balban cherished the dream of becoming Sultan of Delhi, he dissuaded the reigning Sultan from visiting Ajōdhan on one pretext or the other. After having prevented the Sultan from visiting the *jamā'atkhānah* of Bābā Farīd and seeking his blessings, Balban himself proceeded towards Ajōdhan in order to seek the blessings of the Shaykh for his political ambitions. Moreover, the soldiers of the army, which included the disciples and devotees of Bābā Farīd, also visited the Shaykh to pay homage to him. During his meeting with Bābā Farīd, Ulugh Khān offered him a grant of four villages, which Bābā Farīd declined to accept saying "There are many who desire it; give it to them." However, he accepted the cash *futūḥ* of silver coins from him, which was distributed among the poor and the needy afterwards. Moreover, having perceived the secret ambitions of Ulugh Khān, Bābā Farīd recited a few couplets from Firdawsī's famous epic *Shāhnāmah*, which have been translated as such:

⁶⁸ Ibid.

The celebrated Farīdūn (Iranian Emperor) was not an angel,
 Nor was he made of aloe wood or ambergris (meaning he was not extraordinary),
 He had become a luminary owing to his justice and generosity,
 If you too become just and munificent, you can become the equal of Farīdūn.⁶⁹

According to Riazul Islam, the narration of the event in *Siyar al-Awliyā'* clearly indicates that Ulugh Khān regarded the utterances of Bābā Farīd as a blessing (*nafs*) in his favour.⁷⁰

It must be remembered about Balban's meeting with Bābā Farīd that it was a surprise visit, and apparently, the former had not sought permission from the latter before seeing him. Bābā Farīd might have felt uncomfortable due to his presence in his *jamā'atkhānah*, but it was difficult for him to avoid meeting Balban. Moreover, on the basis of one incident of meeting between them, it cannot be inferred that they either had cordial relations, or that Balban used to see the Shaykh regularly.

4.2.4 Attitude towards Land and Cash Grants from the State

As indicated above, Bābā Farīd declined to accept the grant of four villages from Ulugh Khān Balban when he came to see him in Ajōdhan. Similarly, when the governor of Ajōdhan sent him grants of two villages and some cash, he refused to accept it saying that

⁶⁹ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 171, 247-48 and Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 79-80. See also Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', *Rāhat al-Qulūb* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 40 and 'Abd al-Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp.208-9. Sijzī's account, however, does not mention that Bābā Farīd recited the couplets from *Shāhnāmah*. However, according to Jamālī, both Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd and Ulugh Khān Balban met the Shaykh in Ajōdhan. Idem, *Siyar al-Ārifīn*, p. 47. According to *Asrār al-Awliyā'*, the so-called *malḥūz* of Bābā Farīd, once Bābā Farīd told the participants of the *majlis* that Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn on his way to Multan, stopped in Ajōdhan for a while and met him. Ishāq, *Asrār al-Awliyā'* in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 90. It seems to be a later day interpolation, as not only the authenticity of the *malḥūz* has been questioned by many scholars of Sufism, the actual meeting took place between Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn's *nā'ib-i mamlakat* Ulugh Khān Balban and Bābā Farīd.

⁷⁰ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 243.

our spiritual ancestors had never accepted such as thing.⁷¹ In this way, Bābā Farīd continued the traditions of his *Silsilah* by refusing to accept *jāgīrs* from the state, and thus, not becoming a beneficiary of the state. However, Bābā Farīd accepted the cash *futūḥ* from Ulugh Khān Balban, which was later on distributed among the destitute. In fact, Bābā Farīd used to immediately distribute among the poor and the needy all the cash grants or *futūḥ* he received from the people. A seventeenth-century biographer of Bābā Farīd, ‘Alī Aṣghar Chishtī, records in *Jawāhir-i Farīdī* that once Balban sent a dish full of *tankahs* to Bābā Farīd, who reluctantly accepted it. At that time, the sun had already set and it was getting dark, but Bābā Farīd ordered Badr al-Dīn Ishāq to distribute the money among the poor and the needy immediately without waiting for the day, as the former used to say that his *jamā’ atkhānah* was not a storehouse for royal gifts. After distributing all the money, Badr al-Dīn brought a candle to see whether any coin was left. He found a coin, and put it in his cap to give it to some needy person the next morning. When Bābā Farīd went to the mosque for leading ‘*Ishā*’ (night) prayer, he realized that something was disturbing him, as he began his prayer thrice but could not finish it. Upon inquiring, Badr al-Dīn told him everything. Bābā Farīd angrily took that coin from Badr al-Dīn, threw it away and then peacefully led the prayer. The biographer further informs that the whole night Bābā Farīd deeply regretted having touched that coin.⁷² It may be pointed out that *Jawāhir-i Farīdī* is not a contemporary source, and thus, there might be some exaggeration in the account, but Bābā Farīd’s aversion to wealth and riches is in harmony with his austere life style.

⁷¹ Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’, *Rāḥat al-Qulūb* in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 39-40.

⁷² ‘Alī Aṣghar Chishtī, *Jawāhir-i Farīdī*, MS, as cited in Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar*, pp. 101-2. According to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’, a Sufi named Khwājah Karīm, who lived in Delhi, had never touched the coin in his entire life after he chose the path of Sufism. Sijzī, *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*, p. 16.

Bābā Farīd led a life of extreme simplicity and austerity.⁷³ He ate very simple food. Many Chishtī Shaykhs including his own teachers had permitted the borrowing of small amounts of money for everyday needs, but Bābā Farīd went a step further, and strictly forbade that also.⁷⁴ His *jamā'atkhānah* consisted of a hall having a thatched roof, where the inmates lived, and a small cell for Bābā Farīd, where he used to sleep, pray and meditate. He is said to have consumed wild and unsavory fruits like *pīlū* and *dēlah* for years, when his *jamā'atkhānah* had no *futūḥ*.⁷⁵ In this way, Bābā Farīd and the ruling elite of the Sultanate era seem to represent two largely contrasting cultures, as the latter generally lived an extravagant life, full of grandeur and splendour.⁷⁶

Like other Chishtī Sufis, Bābā Farīd also tried to alleviate the sufferings of the people by extending whatever possible help they could. Service of humanity was one of the principal doctrines of Sufism. Khwājah Mu'in al-Dīn of Ajmer had once defined the highest form of obedience to God (*tā'at*) in these words: "To redress the misery of those in distress, to fulfill the needs of the helpless and to feed the hungry".⁷⁷ In the Sultanate, many of the miseries were the result of the oppression of the state officials. The Chishtī

⁷³ He had very few personal possessions such as a small rug, which he used as blanket as well.

⁷⁴ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 49, 66. The same author narrates that Bābā Farīd's preceptor, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn used to borrow some money from his neighbour on some occasions, but later he decided to give up the practice of borrowing and completely rely on God. pp. 48-49.

⁷⁵ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, p. 47.

⁷⁶ It is revealing to compare the lifestyles of Bābā Farīd with his contemporary Suhrawardī Sufī, Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā, who lived in Multan, a few hundred miles from Ajōdhan, where Bābā Farīd lived. Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn was quite affluent, who possessed lands and also dealt in trading. The succession in Suhrawardiyyah was hereditary unlike the Chishtiyyah. Moreover, the Suhrawardī Sufis avoided contact with the common people, and used to visit courts in order to see the rulers, *umarā'*, and high state officials. For a detailed discussion on the differences between the Chishtī and Suhrawardī ideologies and practices, see Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, pp. 216-26.

⁷⁷ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 46.

Sufis tried to mitigate the sufferings of the people by redressing their grievances. In some cases, they even went to the extent of approaching the state officials in order to redress some grievances. Though Bābā Farīd seemed to be reluctant to use his influence, there are a few instances when he contacted the state officials on behalf of some aggrieved person, or complainant for redress of grievance.⁷⁸ On some occasions, he admonished the state officials,⁷⁹ and saved many from their highhandedness and vindictiveness.⁸⁰ However, it must be remembered that Bābā Farīd helped the people at individual level, and his response to the state highhandedness was not at an institutional level.

⁷⁸ For instance, according to Amīr Khūrd, Bābā Farīd was once approached by a person who was in great distress, and insisted that the Shaykh write a letter of recommendation for him to the Sultan. Bābā Farīd reluctantly wrote a letter to Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban, which implied that the real power of bestowing anything on human beings lies with the Supreme Being. It stated: "First I referred this matter to Allah and later to you. If you bestow anything on him (the needy), the real bestower is Allah, and as His agent you will deserve gratitude for doing a favour. But if you fail to bestow anything you are helpless in the matter, as Allah may have prevented you from doing so". Ibid., p. 72. The historical authenticity of the letter is accepted by Nizami, who maintains that the letter was addressed to Sultan Balban. Idem, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 243. See also Appendix for the text of the letter written in Arabic, p. 354. Nevertheless, the account cannot be uncritically accepted owing to a historical fallacy. Bābā Farīd died in 1265, i.e. one year before the accession of Balban to the throne of Delhi, which took place in 1266. The letter must have been written to Ulugh Khān Balban, the deputy-Sultan of Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, and not to Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban.

⁷⁹ According to an anecdote recounted in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, Bābā Farīd was approached by an 'āmil (revenue collector) for help, who was being harassed by the wālī or governor of Ajōdhan. The Shaykh sent a message to the wālī not to harass the 'āmil, but the wālī did not pay much heed to the intercession, and instead started creating more troubles for the 'āmil. The 'āmil again came to Bābā Farīd, and told him everything. The Shaykh replied that probably once he (the 'āmil) might have been approached by someone on behalf of an aggrieved for intercession, and he must have not been sympathetic and helped out. Upon hearing this, the 'āmil promised that he would never ignore an aggrieved in the future. Later, not only the relations of the 'āmil with the wālī were normalized, the latter also visited the jamā'atkhānah of Bābā Farīd and sought forgiveness. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 250. See also Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 36-37. The incident not only reveals that Bābā Farīd tried to mitigate state oppression, but also proves that he has rightly been labeled as a 'supreme psychologist' by a recent biographer. Qasimi, *Baba Fariduddin Masud Ganj-i-Shakar*, p. 31.

⁸⁰ Jamālī informs that in a town near Ajōdhan, an ill-tempered and ruthless Turkish officer was appointed. He had a falcon, which he had entrusted to the care of his mir-i shikār (the officer in-charge of the royal hunt). Once the mir-i shikār lost the falcon, and he approached Bābā Farīd in panic, as he feared that the Turk would exterminate him and his entire family as a punishment. The Shaykh assisted the panic-stricken mir-i shikār in locating the lost falcon by his intuitive powers. For details of the incident, see Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 42-43. Similarly, once Bābā Farīd helped a person recover his wife, who had been enslaved during a raid on a village by the darōghah (gate-keeper) of Dīpālpur. For details of the incident, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 83-84, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 44-45.

4.3 Bābā Farīd and the ‘*Ulamā*’

Many of his contemporary ‘*ulamā*’ were hostile toward Bābā Farīd. One comes across references of ‘*ulamā*’ like Sharaf al-Dīn Qiyāmī,⁸¹ and Qāḍī ‘Abd Allāh of Ajōdhan, also known as Qāḍī Muḥammad Abū ‘l-Faḍl,⁸² who were critical of Sufism and the Sufis. They had unfavorable or hostile attitude towards Bābā Farīd. Some of these ‘*ulamā*’ created trouble for him, his family, and disciples as well. The apparent bone of contention between them was the Sufi doctrine and practice of *samā*’.

Like his preceptor, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, Bābā Farīd had fondness for *samā*’,⁸³ and he held *samā*’ gatherings in his *jamā’atkhānah* in Ajōdhan. He used to attend such gatherings in other *khānqāhs* as well. According to *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād* and *Siyar al-‘Ārifin*, a *qāḍī* of Ajōdhan did not approve of Bābā Farīd’s *samā*’ gatherings in the town, and that was why he used to create trouble for him as well as his family, disciples and devotees. The *qāḍī* raised the issue with the scholars of Multan, with the intention of getting a legal verdict or a *fatwā* against the Shaykh. He asked them: “An educated man lives in a mosque, hears songs and dances. What is your opinion about him?” Instead of issuing the *fatwā* then and there, the ‘*ulamā*’ asked the *qāḍī*: “Let us know first of all who the person is about whom you want this *fatwā*. When the ‘*ulamā*’ of Multan heard the name of Bābā Farīd, they replied: “You have referred to a Sufi against whom no *mujtahid* dare raise his finger.” The *qāḍī* then thought of putting an end to the life of the Shaykh by hiring an assassin.⁸⁴ Once a *qalandar* even tried to make an attempt on the life of the

⁸¹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*’, p. 83.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

⁸³ For details see Aslam, “*Salāṭin-i Dehli wa Shāhān-i Mughliyyah kā Dhauq-i Mawsiqī*,” p. 10.

⁸⁴ Sijzī, *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*, p. 166, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifin*, pp. 33-34.

Shaykh, but was overwhelmed by the awe-inspiring personality of Bābā Farīd, and so gave up his ulterior plan, and fled from the *jamā' atkhānah*.⁸⁵

Some useful inferences can be drawn from the first incident. First, it is indicative of the extent of the popularity of Bābā Farīd among the people as well as in the circles of some 'ulamā', and why it was difficult to raise even a finger against him. Secondly, the incident betrays the jealousy of the *qāḍī* as his own religious authority was being undermined by the growing popularity of Bābā Farīd in the town. If in the opinion of the *qāḍī*, the *samā'* gatherings were unlawful, even then it was not permissible on religious grounds to execute a person for it. On the contrary, Bābā Farīd as well as other Chishtī Shaykhs preached pacifism and non-violence. Once Bābā Farīd was presented a knife, but he remarked that he would have preferred a needle to a knife, as a knife is used for cutting (or separating), whereas a needle is used for stitching (or uniting).⁸⁶

4.4 Notable *Khulafā'* of Bābā Farīd: Continuing the Chishtī Traditions

The Chishtī traditions of detachment from political affairs and court, and adoption of voluntary poverty were continued by the *khulafā'* of Bābā Farīd. Given below is a brief discussion on the attitude of some of the notable *khulafā'* of Bābā Farīd in this regard:

4.4.1 Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Mutawakkil (d. 1272) was a *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd, who happened to be his younger brother as well. He lived in Delhi but kept himself aloof from

⁸⁵ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 34.

⁸⁶ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 384.

state and politics.⁸⁷ He was appointed *imām* of a mosque constructed by an affluent Turkish officer named Aitamar.⁸⁸ He led a simple and austere life. Once he was offered five hundred silver *tankahs* by a group of *qalandars*, but he distributed all the money among the poor and the needy the same day.⁸⁹ In this way, Najīb al-Dīn followed the Chishtī traditions as well as his preceptors by not personally consuming the *futūh*.

4.4.2 Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq was another notable *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd, who happened to be his son-in-law as well.⁹⁰ He was also entrusted the management of Bābā Farīd's *jamā' atkhānah*. On the orders of Bābā Farīd, he had enrolled Malik Sharaf al-Dīn Kubrā, the *muqta'* (chief officer of revenue grant) of Dīpālpur, as his disciple.⁹¹

4.4.3 Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn of Hānsī (d. 1260/1 circa) was the senior-most disciple, close friend and a *khalīfah*⁹² of Bābā Farīd. Like his friend and preceptor, he lived in extreme poverty. Before entering the discipleship of Bābā Farīd, he was the *khaṭīb* of Hānsī, and possessed land and other property, but he abandoned all his possessions after

⁸⁷ For his views regarding government service, see Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifin*, p. 60.

⁸⁸ See details in Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 134, and Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 78-79.

⁸⁹ Jamālī, v, p. 99.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 55, and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, p. 73.

⁹¹ According to Amīr Khūrd, once some of the opponents of the Malik poisoned the ears of the Sultan against him, and consequently, he was dismissed from his position at official orders. The Malik asked for help from his preceptor, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn. It appears from the account in *Siyar al-Awliyā'* that the Shaykh used his contacts with Qāḍī Ṣadr al-Dīn of Ajōdhan, in order to plead the innocence of the *muqta'*. It seems that the Shaykh had friendly ties with the Qāḍī. Later, the *muqta'* was released by the Sultan when the latter came to know that he was innocent. It clearly establishes that Shaykh Badr al-Dīn used his contacts with a state official in order to redress the grievance of his disciple, who himself was an influential state official. Idem, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 175.

⁹² Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifin*, p. 32, and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, pp. 73-74. The authorship of an Arabic work *Mulhimāt* is credited to him, which contains Sufī aphorisms. Moreover, his *dīwān* (collection of poetry) in Persian has also survived. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar*, p. 70.

becoming the disciple of Bābā Farīd.⁹³ Though his personal friends included influential people like Miran, the in-charge of a *mauza*‘ (village) near Agra,⁹⁴ and *Shaykh al-Qudḍāt wa al-Khuṭabā*‘ Hussām al-Dīn of Andrapat,⁹⁵ but he kept himself aloof from court and politics.

4.4.4 Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ṣābir of Kalyar (District Sahāranpur) (d. 1291) was another renowned *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd.⁹⁶ The sub-*silsilah* or sub-lineage of Chishtī-Ṣābirīs is known after him. The hagiographies provide very scanty information about him. He did not enroll many disciples, and did not set up a regular *khānqāh* as well.⁹⁷ He led an extremely austere life, and strictly followed the Chishtī traditions of detachment from court and politics.

However, the most distinguished *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd was Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’, who was his principal successor as well, and who assumed the leadership of the Chishtī *Silsilah* after Bābā Farīd’s demise. Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn’s relationship with the Sultans of Delhi and attitude towards the state have been discussed in the ensuing section.

⁹³ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*’, pp. 181.

⁹⁴ See details in *ibid.*, pp. 179-80.

⁹⁵ See details in *ibid.*, pp. 181-82.

⁹⁶ See biographical sketch in ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 292-99, and W. D. Begg, *The Big Five Sufis of India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Millat Book Centre, 1999 rpt., first published 1972 under the title *The Big Five of India in Sufism*), pp. 191-221.

⁹⁷ For a brief biographical note on Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ṣābir, see Moinul Haq, “Rise and Expansion of the Chishtis in the Subcontinent (II),” *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXII, part IV (October 1974), pp. 219-21; for the role of the Chishtī-Ṣābirīs, see pp. 219-31.

Section II Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' and the Preservation and Expansion of the Space of the *Silsilah*

Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'⁹⁸ (b. 1238-d.1325) was the most distinguished *khalīfah* and the principal successor of Bābā Farīd. His real name was Saiyyid Muḥammad, but he was popularly known as *Maḥbūb-i Ilāhī* (the beloved of God) and *Sulṭān Jī*. A sub-branch of Chishtī *Silsilah* named Niẓāmiyyah was derived from him. He was born in 1238 in Badāyūn, east of Delhi, where his ancestors had settled after migration from Bukhāra. At a tender age, his father, Saiyyid Aḥmad, passed away, and his mother, Bībī Zulaykhā, raised him. Her fervent piety deeply influenced her son.⁹⁹ One of his teachers at Badāyūn was Mawlānā 'Alā' al-Dīn Usūlī,¹⁰⁰ who lived in extreme austerity and simplicity.¹⁰¹ According to *Khayr al-Majālis*, he used to instruct the students free of charge, and despite the fact that he had to starve, he never accepted anything from anybody. When a wealthy native of his town came to know about his poverty and consequent starvation, and sent him some eatables, he refused to accept them. He also reprimanded the barber, who had disclosed his financial hardships to others.¹⁰² Therefore, the ideas of his early teachers, the Chishtī traditions of austerity, and

⁹⁸ Awliyā' is the plural of *wālī*, meaning a friend of God, i.e. a Sufi. According to Nizami, Ḥasan Sijzī had referred to the Shaykh as Sulṭān al-Awliyā' in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*. It may be that later people dropped the epithet Sulṭān and continued Awliyā' with his name. Nizami also quotes Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz, who maintained that the use of a plural indicated emphasis on that quality, and he also cited examples from Quran as well. Nizam Ad-Din Awliya, *Morals for the Heart*, Eng. trans. Bruce B. Lawrence (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), see Introduction by K. A. Nizami, pp. 51-52, n.51. However, according to Nithār Aḥmad Fārūqī, the complete title of the Shaykh was *Niẓām al-Dīn wa al-Millat Niẓām al-Awliyā'*, but later, the last word Awliyā' remained with his name. See Preface by Nithār Aḥmad Fārūqī in Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 76.

⁹⁹ For a brief biographical sketch, see 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, pp. 303-4.

¹⁰⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 132, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 58. For details, see pp. 81-82.

¹⁰¹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 419.

¹⁰² Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majālis*, p. 180.

more particularly, the views and practices of his preceptor, Bābā Farīd, shaped the ideas of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn.

At the age of sixteen, the family of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn moved to Delhi so that he could get higher education, though they had scarce resources and found it difficult to make both their ends meet. One of his teachers in Delhi, Mawlānā Kamāl al-Dīn Zāhid, was a renowned scholar of *ḥadīth*, who lived a life of extreme austerity and simplicity. Once Sultan Balban offered the Mawlānā to be his *imām* of prayer, but he turned down the offer by curtly replying that the only thing left to him were his prayers, which he did not want to lose by accepting the Sultan's offer. Speechless, the Sultan apologetically allowed him to leave.¹⁰³ The teachers of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn also shaped his attitude towards wealth and political authorities, before he came in contact with Bābā Farīd.

Shortly after his arrival in Delhi, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn distinguished himself as an erudite scholar in the city. There he had a regular contact with Bābā Farīd's brother and disciple, Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Mutawakkil. In 1257/8, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn met Bābā Farīd in his *jamā' atkhānah* in Ajōdhan, where the former was formally initiated by the latter in Chishtī *Silsilah*. Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn returned to Delhi and visited Ajōdhan again. In 1265, during the third trip to Ajōdhan, he met his preceptor for the last time, who granted him a *khilāfatnāmah*, which authorized Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn to continue the *Silsilah* by enrolling disciples and disseminating the teachings of Bābā Farīd and the *Silsilah*.

¹⁰³ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 106.

Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn established his *jamā'atkhānah* in Ghiyāthpur,¹⁰⁴ a small village on the banks of River Jumnā situated in the vicinity of Delhi. The village was about two kilometers from Kīlūkhārī, where Sultan Balban's successor, Sultan Mu'izz al-Dīn Kēqubād, later set up his capital.¹⁰⁵ Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn spent the rest of his life in Ghiyāthpur, visiting Ajōdhan thrice during the lifetime of his preceptor, and once immediately after his demise. Thus, during the last five decades of his life, he lived in the vicinity of the capital as the principal successor of Bābā Farīd and the leader of the Chishtī *Silsilah*. In the opinion of Schimmel, the Shaykh's name marks the 'high tide of mystical life in Delhi'.¹⁰⁶ During the span of half a century, nine Sultans ascended the throne of Delhi, but the Shaykh remained aloof from the state and politics. The Shaykh breathed his last in 1325, and was buried in his *jamā'atkhānah* in Ghiyāthpur.¹⁰⁷

Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' himself did not write any book.¹⁰⁸ However, his *malfūzāt* were collected by many of his disciples. Among these, the most renowned collection is rendered by Amīr Ḥasan 'Alā' Sijzī of Delhi, titled *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*. The work, compiled between 1307 and 1322, is considered to be a genuine compilation by all historians and scholars of Sufism, and also regarded as the foremost work of *malfūzāt* genre in India. It is also considered to be an alternative source of social and political

¹⁰⁴ For a study of the *jamā'atkhānah* of the Shaykh, see Muhammad Salim, "Jama'at-Khana of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi", *The Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference, (Third Session) Held at Dacca, 1953* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1955), pp. 183-89.

¹⁰⁵ The Sultan also constructed a palace, fort, *jāmi'* mosque and other buildings in Kīlūkhārī. Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, p. 63.

¹⁰⁶ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 348.

¹⁰⁷ For details of life history, see Moḥammad Ḥabīb, *Ḥaḍrat Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā': Ḥayāt aur Ta'limāt* (Delhi: Delhi University, 1970), and K. A. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u-d-dīn Auliya* (Delhi: Idārah-'i Adabiyāt-i Dellī, 1991).

¹⁰⁸ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 76.

history of the Sultanate era.¹⁰⁹ Another *malḥūz* is *Durr-i Nizāmī*, compiled by Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn's disciple, 'Alī ibn Maḥmūd Jāndār.¹¹⁰ Like the earlier one, this *malḥūz* is also considered to be historically genuine, and probably the first *malḥūz* to appear, even before *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*.¹¹¹ Similarly, Amīr Khusrau (d. 1325) is said to have compiled a *malḥūz* titled *Afḍal al-Fawā'id* in two volumes, the second one titled *Rāḥat al-Muḥibbīn*.¹¹² Whereas some scholars like Wahid Mirza consider the *malḥūz* historically genuine,¹¹³ others such as Habib and Bruce Lawrence question its authenticity.¹¹⁴ Another compilation of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn's utterance is *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, compiled by Muḥammad Jamāl Qiwām.¹¹⁵ The compiler was a paternal grandson of Shaykh Qiwām al-Dīn (popularly known as Shaykh Shams al-'Ārifīn), who was a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā'. The work, compiled in Daulatabad in 755 A.H./1354 A.D., is considered to be authentic. However, *Nizāmī Bansarī*,¹¹⁶ a biography of Shaykh

¹⁰⁹ Muḥammad Aslam, "Fawā'id al-Fu'ād—Tārīkhī wa Samāji Ahammiyyat", *Mujallah-'i Tārīkh wa Thaḳāfat-i Pākistān*, vol. 4, no. 1 (April-Sept. 1993), pp. 3-41.

¹¹⁰ See chap. 3, note 127 (supra).

¹¹¹ Nizami, "Durr-i-Nizāmī—A Unique but Less-known *malḥūz* of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya", in *On Sources and Source Material*, p. 46; for details, see pp. 40-55. The article was first published in Hilal Ahmad Zubairi, ed., *Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi Memorial Volume II* (Karachi: Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi Academy, 1994 rpt., first published 1983)

¹¹² Amīr Khusrau, *Rāḥat al-Muḥibbīn* and *Afḍal al-Fawā'id* in *Hasht Bahisht*.

¹¹³ Wahid Mirzā, *Amīr Khusrau* (Delhi: National Amīr Khusrau Society, 1986 rpt., first published 1945), pp. 258-61.

¹¹⁴ Habib, "Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period", pp. 31-35, Idem, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, see pp. 421-25 (rpt. of the earlier cited work), and Bruce B. Lawrence, "Afzal al-fawā'id—A Reassessment" in *Life, Times and Works of Amir Khusrau Dehlavi*, ed. Z. Ansari (New Delhi: National Amir Khusrau Society, 1975), pp. 119-31.

¹¹⁵ Muḥammad Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, MS, 'Uthmāniyyah University Library, Hyderabad, Deccan, dated 791 A.H./1388 A.D.

¹¹⁶ Rāj Kumār Hardēv, *Nizāmī Bansarī*, Urdu trans. Khwājah Ḥasan Nizāmī, abridged by Maḥmūd al-Raḥmān (Islamabad: Dost Publications, 2000). In original Persian work attributed to Rāj Kumār Hardēv was titled *Chihal Rūzah*, which was translated in Urdu and published by Khwājah Ḥasan Nizāmī in 1945. The translator gave a new name to the book, and also added references and explanatory notes where required.

Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' written by a convert Rāj Kumār Hardēv, who got enrolled as a disciple of the Shaykh after conversion to Islam, seems to be an apocryphal work.¹¹⁷

In addition to the above, Saiyyid Muḥammad ibn Mubārak Kirmānī (d. 1368), better remembered as Amīr Khūrd Kirmānī, who was a disciple of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, composed *Siyar al-Awliyā'* in order to preserve the history of the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the *khānqāh* life of the Chishtīs in India. Moreover, some other near contemporary sources such as *Khayr al-Majālis*¹¹⁸ (the *malḥūz* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd *Chirāgh-i Dehlī* compiled in 1354 by Ḥamīd al-Dīn Qalandar, d. 1367), *Aḥsan al-Aqwāl*¹¹⁹ and *Nafā'is al-Anfās*¹²⁰ (the *malḥūzāt* of Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb compiled by his disciple Ḥammād ibn 'Imād Kāshānī) provide very useful information about the life and teachings of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā'. Nevertheless, some of the hagiographical literature is

¹¹⁷ There are a number of inconsistencies in the work. Most importantly, its authorship is dubious. According to it, its author, Rāj Kumār Hardēv, originally belonged to the royal family of Deogir, but later converted to Islam and was rechristened Aḥmad Ayāz by Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā'. He became a close associate of Crown Prince, Jūnā Ulugh Khān (Muḥammad ibn Tughluq) during the reign of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, when he was appointed as *mīr-i 'imārāt* (in-charge of construction; architect). Later, when the Crown Prince ascended the throne of Delhi, Aḥmad Ayāz became his Prime Minister, and thus, received the official title of *Khawājah-i Jahān*. See *Ibid.*, *passim*. An almost similar biographical sketch of Aḥmad Ayāz is given in *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, but it has been taken from *Nizāmī Bansarī* as mentioned in a note. Saiyyid 'Abd al-Ḥa'īyy Barēlvī, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir wa Bahjat al-Masāmi'*, Urdu trans. Abū Yahyā Imām Khān Naushahravī, vol. II (Lahore: Maqbūl Academy, 1965), pp 27-8, see also p. 28, n.1. Henceforth, referred to as *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*. However, according to Baranī, the father of Aḥmad Ayāz was 'Alā' al-Dīn Ayāz, who was the *kōtwāl* of *Hiṣār-i Nau* (the capital Kilūkhari) during the reign of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī. *Idem*, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 278. So the family did not belong to Deogir, and Aḥmad Ayāz was not a convert. Ernst and Lawrence do not clearly affirm the authenticity of the work, but write that it is "supposed to be by a fourteenth-century Hindu, Har Dev." *Idem*, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 115.

¹¹⁸ For location of the manuscript, see chap. 3, note 90 (*supra*).

¹¹⁹ For reviews on *Aḥsan al-Aqwāl*, see K. A. Nizami, "A Note on *Aḥsan-al-Aqwāl*", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. 3 (1955), pp. 40-44, and Aslam, *Malḥūzātī Adab ki Tārīkhī Aḥammīyyat*, pp. 156-76.

¹²⁰ For a review on *Nafā'is al-Anfās*, see Aslam, *Malḥūzātī Adab ki Tārīkhī Aḥammīyyat*, pp. 177-88.

not extant now,¹²¹ but one comes across their references in some extant contemporary or near contemporary works.

4.5 Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's Attitude towards Political Authorities

The Chishtī tradition of detachment from political affairs and court was not only followed by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, it is believed to have reached its zenith under him. Here it seems useful to explore his views and perceptions in this regard. Some anecdotes narrated by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, as recorded in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, throw ample light on his views regarding political authorities. According to Nizami, the courtiers and *umarā'* who attended the meetings in the Shaykh's *jamā'atkhānah* used to transmit these anecdotes to the rulers, who themselves knew the Shaykh's peculiar and indirect method of giving advice.¹²²

¹²¹ The following works dealing with the life and teachings of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn have been destroyed, and so they are not available now:

- *Tuḥfat al-Abrār Karāmat al-Akhyār*. It was compiled by Shaykh 'Azīz al-Dīn, the maternal grandson of Bābā Farīd. The compilation was partly seen by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn himself. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 202.
- *Anwār al-Majālis*. It was compiled by Khwājah Saiyyid Muḥammad Imām, the son of Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq and the maternal grandson of Bābā Farīd. After the death of his father, the compiler was brought up by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn himself. Amīr Khūrd also refers to this work. Ibid., p. 479.
- *Majmu' al-Fawā'id*. It was a *malfūz* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn compiled by Khwājah 'Abd al-'Azīz (also referred to as 'Azīz al-Dīn), the son of Khwājah Abū Bakr. The latter was a nephew (son of the real sister) of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn. Ibid., p. 207.
- *Khalāṣat al-Manāqib*. This work was authored by Mawlānā 'Alī Shāh Jāndār, who was a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn. Like other works, it has perished but its reference is recorded by Amīr Khūrd. Ibid., p. 449.
- *Ḥasratnāmah*. Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's disciple, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī, the renowned courtier, historian and political theorist of fourteenth-century, had written it. The work dealt with Sufism, and also included reminiscences of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'. Though the work is now extant, there are references to *Ḥasratnāmah* in *Siyar al-Awliyā'* and *Akhhār al-Akhyār*. Ibid., pp. 313, 346-48, 531-32, and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, pp. 109-11.
- Another *malfūz* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was compiled by Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn Ḍhārī, who was a disciple of the Shaykh. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 318.

¹²² K. A. Nizami, "Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and Their Attitude towards the State", *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, Deccan, vol. XXIV (January 1950), (rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), p. 69.

For instance, once Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn narrated that Shaykh Abū Saʿīd Tabrīzī (the preceptor of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī) lived a life of extreme austerity and simplicity, and preferred poverty to riches. When the governor of Tabrīz came to know about his financial hardships, he sent some cash to one of the servants of the Shaykh through his *ḥājib* (chamberlain), and asked the servant to spend it whenever needed. The servant was also instructed not to disclose the matter to the Shaykh. The servant acted accordingly. However, after feeling some uneasiness and lack of concentration while praying and meditating, the Shaykh inquired about the source of expenditure of the *khānqāh*. The servant revealed everything to the Shaykh, who got so enraged that he ordered the soil to be dug up and thrown away where the *ḥājib* had set his foot in his *khānqāh*, and the servant was also expelled from his circle.¹²³ This anecdote gives a vivid idea of what Shaykh Tabrīzī thought about grants from the state.

However, in the opinion of Riazul Islam, the attitude of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was less extreme on this matter, as he used to receive the princes, *umarāʾ*, and high state officials in his *jamāʿatkhānah*,¹²⁴ though, according to Amīr Khūrd, the Shaykh did not like the fanfare of the princely visits and also complained that they ruined his time.¹²⁵ Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was quite reluctant to visit the houses of the *umarāʾ*, who were his disciples.¹²⁶ According to the Chishtī traditions, visits to the royal court were strictly

¹²³ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 303-4.

¹²⁴ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 243.

¹²⁵ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 131.

¹²⁶ Once a high state official under Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn named Malik Qarā Bēg, who was also a disciple of the Shaykh, organized a *samā'* gathering in the honour of his preceptor at his residence, but

forbidden, but there were no clear rules governing the visits to the high state officials, and that had been left to the discretion of the individual Sufi Shaykhs. The decision to visit a high state official by the Chishtī leader must have been governed by a number of considerations, including the religious-spiritual orientation of that official, and the purpose and/or occasion of the visit.

Nevertheless, at times the visits of the princes, *umarā'* and high state officials to the *jamā'atkhānah* of the Shaykh proved beneficial for the people, who got their grievances redressed through the Shaykh from the officials.¹²⁷ Following in the footsteps of his preceptor, Bābā Farīd, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' also wrote a few letters of recommendation to the state officials to help the aggrieved people. An incident recorded in *Aḥsan al-Aqwāl* (the *malfūz* of Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb) reveals that once Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' gave a letter to Amīr Khusrau, which was addressed to the *kōtwāl* (head of the police department) of Kīlūkhārī. The letter was meant for intercession on behalf of a complainant.¹²⁸ However, it must be remembered that the help extended to the aggrieved people was on an individual basis, and it cannot be taken to suggest that the Shaykh's response to the miseries of the people due to the highhandedness of the state officials was institutional in any sense.

Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn accepted the invitation on the insistence of the Malik after considerable hesitation. Habib, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, p. 365.

¹²⁷ However, as compared to the Chishtīs, the Suhrawardī Sufis played a mediational role between the state and the people more effectively due to their cordial relationship with the Sultans, *umarā'* and high state officials. For a detailed analysis see Tanvir Anjum, "Civil Society in Medieval India: A Case Study of Sufism (1206-1398)" (Unpublished M.Phil. diss., Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, 1998), pp. 99-102.

¹²⁸ Ḥammād ibn 'Imād Kāshānī, *Aḥsan al-Aqwāl*, MS, Mawlānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh, *Fārsī, Madhhab, Taṣawwuf*, no. 318, f. 37b.

While discussing Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's perception of political authorities, it is essential to explore his attitude towards government service (*shughl*) as well. *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* reveals that Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn detested the pursuit of official positions by the pious and devout people. An anecdote narrated by the Shaykh informs that once a certain person in Damascus used to worship and pray in a mosque all night long hoping to get the position of *Shaykh al-Islām*. With tears in his eyes, the Shaykh condemned such worship and prayers as well as the obsessive pursuit of official designations and titles.¹²⁹ Similarly, in his early days, before entering the fold of discipleship of Bābā Farīd, once Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' had asked Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Mutawakkil, the brother and disciple of Bābā Farīd, to pray for his appointment as *qāḍī*, but Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn had replied: "Don't be a *qāḍī*, be something else."¹³⁰ The views of Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Mutawakkil regarding the judicial system of the Sultanate of Delhi were similar to those of his preceptors, Bābā Farīd and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, and betray their mistrust in the judicial apparatus of the Sultanate. It speaks volumes of the inefficient judicial system of the Sultanate, as it seems that in many cases, the *qāḍīs* had become a source of state oppression and coercion, instead of redressing the complaints of the aggrieved people and punishing the offenders. It is important to recall here that though the '*ulamā*' were appointed as *qāḍī*, their appointments, transfers and dismissals were quite often politically motivated.

Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn condemned government service and demanded from his *khulafā'* an oath to abstain from it. Nonetheless, the restriction upon joining state service

¹²⁹ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 39-40.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46, Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 168, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 60.

was placed only on Sufis of high spiritual caliber, particularly those who had received patents of spiritual authority or certificates of succession (*khilāfatnāmē*) from him, and were authorized to enroll disciples. Before appointing his disciples as successors or *khalīfah*, four things were demanded from them by the Shaykh: first, they would not accumulate the *futūh*; secondly, they would avoid the company of kings and *umarā'*; thirdly, they would not accept royal grants; and lastly, they would abstain from joining the government service.¹³¹ Even the *khilāfatnāmē* were cancelled if the *khulafā'* were found inclined towards royal services. For instance, the *khilāfatnāmāh* of Qāḍī Muḥyi al-Dīn Kāshānī (d. 1319)¹³² was taken back as a punishment when he expressed his wish to serve as the *qāḍī* of Oudh, and his *khilāfat* was kept in abeyance for a year.¹³³

Nevertheless, other disciples, who did not possess a high degree of spiritual caliber, were not bound by the same principles or restrictions. For instance, Amīr Khusrau, one of the favourite disciples of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, and Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, were allowed to join imperial service and lead normal public lives like others. They consorted with the kings and *umarā'*, and also held high offices in camp and court. But it is important to bear in mind that they were not granted *khilāfat* by Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn. Moreover, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn also admitted *umarā'* and princes in his discipleship, as

¹³¹ Nizāmī, *Tārīkh-i Mashā'ikh-i Chisht*, vol. I, pp. 362-63. See the text of the *khilāfatnāmāh* of Qāḍī Muḥyi al-Dīn Kāshānī in Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 295.

¹³² For a brief biographical note, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 294-96, and Mawlawī Raḥmān 'Alī, *Tadhkīra-'i 'Ulamā-'i Hind*, Urdu trans. and ed. Muḥammad Ayyūb Qādirī, Introduction by Syed Moin al-Haq (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1961 rpt., first published from Lucknow: Newal Kishore Press, 1894), pp. 487-88.

¹³³ For details, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 295-96. After becoming a disciple of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, Qāḍī Muḥyi al-Dīn Kāshānī had given up his official position, which was hereditary, along with the stipends from the state. p. 295. However, his official title of Qāḍī remained with his name. Also see the views of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' about *qāḍīs* in Amīr Khusrau, *Afḍal al-Fawā'id* in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 16-17. See also 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 333-34.

evident from the cases of Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī, the historian and courtier, Khwājah Mu'ayyad al-Dīn,¹³⁴ a close associate of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn when he was a prince, Malik Qīrān,¹³⁵ the *amīr-i shikār* (in-charge of the royal hunts), Malik Ḥussām al-Dīn Qatlugh,¹³⁶ an *amīr* who was also the Sultan's nephew (his sister's son), Malik Qarā Bēg or Qarā Bakk, an *amīr* close to the Sultan,¹³⁷ Talbughah Bughdah,¹³⁸ an *amīr* of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn and Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak, and 'Azīz, the *kōtwāl* of Badāyūn. Moreover, many members of the royal family were also disciples of the Shaykh, such as Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn's sons, Princes Khiḍr Khān and Shādī Khān,¹³⁹ and Mawlānā Sharaf al-Dīn,¹⁴⁰ a nephew of the Sultan. It was for the first time in the history of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India that the members of the ruling elite and the royal family had joined the Chishtī circles in large numbers.¹⁴¹ It must have cast a positive impact on the behaviour of these officials. However, it cannot be taken to suggest that the *Silsilah* had accepted

¹³⁴ Khwājah Mu'ayyad al-Dīn, a disciple of the Shaykh, was a close associate of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn when the latter was a prince. When 'Alā' al-Dīn became the Sultan of Delhi, he sent a *ḥājib* to the Shaykh and requested him to grant leave to Mu'ayyad al-Dīn, so that he could help the new Sultan in state affairs. The Shaykh, however, did not grant him leave, and said to the *ḥājib* that he had to do something else. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 311, Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 88, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, p. 340.

¹³⁵ He was a trusted *amīr* of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī. After becoming the disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, he had offered to pay off the debt of any disciple of the Shaykh who was in need. He used to spend the huge amount of his earnings in charity. Muḥammad Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, Urdu trans. and Introduction Nithār Aḥmad Fārūqī (Rāmpur: Jāmi'ah al-'Ulūm Furqāniyyah, Idārah-'i Nashar-o Ishā'at, 1994), p. 113.

¹³⁶ Malik Ḥussām al-Dīn was a very devoted disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn. Upon the Shaykh's visit to his residence, he distributed half of his possessions and earnings in charity and also set free all his slaves to commemorate the visit. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

¹³⁷ He was also an influential *amīr* of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn. Once the Shaykh requested him to financially help a poor man in connection with the marriage of his two daughters. The Malik, who had made arrangements for the marriage of his own daughter, handed over everything to the poor man. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.

¹³⁸ He was also known for his generosity towards the poor and the destitute. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁴¹ Ishtiyāq Aḥmad Zillī, "*Mashā'ikh-i Chisht aur Ḥukūmat-i Waqt: Bāhimī Rawābiṭ kā Tajziyyah*" in *Maḍāmīn-i Taṣawwuf*, ed. Muḥammad Idrīs (Lahore: Dost Associates, 1998), p. 35.

the state patronage, as argued by Zilli,¹⁴² since Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn kept himself aloof from the court and the Sultans, and never gave *khilāfat* or spiritual succession to any of these members of the ruling elite and the royal family.

After having briefly discussed the views of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn regarding the political authorities, it seems pertinent to turn to the relationship of the Shaykh with his contemporary Sultans of Delhi.

4.6 Relationship between Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn and his Contemporary Sultans

Like his preceptors, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn maintained a distance from the court, and avoided any association with the Sultans. As the head of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, he lived in the capital under the reigns of more than nine Sultans of Delhi, but he remained explicitly indifferent towards his contemporary rulers. His attitude towards the contemporary rulers has been characterized as that of ‘contempuous indifference.’¹⁴³ In fact, the Chishtī tradition of detachment from political affairs and court reached its zenith during the times of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’. During the five decades when he lived in the vicinity of Delhi as the leader of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, the policy of the state towards the Sufis in general, and the Chishtī leadership in particular, underwent a number of shifts. It raises some critical questions as to what was the nature of these shifts in the official policy towards the Chishtī Sufis, what factors informed these shifts, and what bearing they had on the state-Sufi relationship? What follows is a discussion on and analysis of the

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 38, 43.

¹⁴³ Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India*, p. 58.

relationship between Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn and the successive Sultans of Delhi, keeping in view the above-mentioned questions.

A few months after the demise of Bābā Farīd, and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā's assumption of the leadership of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd passed away, and his father-in-law and deputy-Sultan, Ulugh Khān Balban, ascended the throne of Delhi with the epithet Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn (r. 1266-86). The contemporary and near contemporary records are silent regarding the relationship of Sultan Balban and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn. Though Balban had visited Bābā Farīd in Ajōdhan as deputy-Sultan before accession to the throne of Delhi, and Bābā Farīd had predicted his assumption of kingship, he remained indifferent to his principal successor after assuming the office of Sultan. Nevertheless, Balban's son, Prince Muḥammad, who was assigned the governorship of Multan, had cordial relations with Amīr Ḥasan 'Alā' Sijzī and Amīr Khusrau, the two eminent disciples of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn. The Prince, being a renowned patron of scholars and the learned people, invited the two to Multan, and took them in his service as *dawātdār* (in-charge of royal writing case) and *muṣḥaf-bardār* (keeper of the Quran) respectively.¹⁴⁴ However, they both returned to Delhi when the Prince fell fighting against the Mongols.

Sultan Balban's successor was his eighteen years old grandson, Sultan Mu'izz al-Dīn Kēqubād (r. 1286-90), who was the son of Bughrā Khān. His reign was marked by

¹⁴⁴ Aslam, "*Fawā'id al-Fu'ād—Tārīkhī wa Samāji Ahammiyyat*", p. 7. Habib also writes that Amīr Khusrau was keeper of the Quran. Idem, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, p. 365. However, according to Qureshi, *kitābdār* (in-charge of the royal library) was also called *muṣḥaf-bardār*. Idem, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 64, n.9.

chaos and confusion, as the new Sultan neglected the affairs of the state and spent most of his time in merry-making.¹⁴⁵ The Sultan shifted his capital to Kīlūkharī in the vicinity of Delhi, which was closer to Ghiyāthpur, where Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn lived. However, during these years, the Shaykh kept himself aloof from the state and politics, whereas the Sultan also remained indifferent towards the Shaykh. In 1290, Sultan Kēqubād was replaced by Sultan Shams al-Dīn Kēkā'ūs, a minor son of Kēqubād, but he was soon dismissed after a very brief reign of a little more than three months in the wake of the Khaljī Revolution.¹⁴⁶ The silence of historical records about the relationship of the Ilbarite rulers and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn can be explained by the fact that in the pre-Khaljī Revolution times, the fame and popularity of the Shaykh had not reached to the height, which he earned in the post-Khaljī Revolution period.

4.6.1 Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Khaljī

Sultan Kēkā'ūs was replaced by Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Khaljī (r. 1290-96), the leader of the Khaljī party of *umarā'*. The new Sultan is said to have had a mild disposition and benevolent temperament,¹⁴⁷ but the execution of a Sufī named Saiyyidī Muwallih¹⁴⁸ during his reign cast a shadow on his entire regime, which has been regarded as “an unfortunate departure from his generous policy.”¹⁴⁹ Saiyyidī Muwallih had constructed a

¹⁴⁵ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 128-31, and 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 180-81.

¹⁴⁶ 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 199-202, Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 60-61, and 'Abdul Qādir bin Mulūk *Shāh* al-Badāonī, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, (Selections from Histories), Eng. trans. and ed. George S. A. Ranking, vol. 1 (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1898; reprinted from Karachi: Karimsons, 1976), pp. 229-30.

¹⁴⁷ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 193-94.

¹⁴⁸ For details of the incident, see *ibid.*, pp. 208-12, 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 209-11, Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 65-67, Bakhshī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, pp. 61-62, Al-Badāonī, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, (Ranking), vol. 1, pp. 233-35, Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭalīb), vol. 1, pp. 332-36, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 282-83.

¹⁴⁹ Majumdar, et al., *An Advanced History of India*, p. 297.

magnificent *khānqāh* in Delhi, and was known for his lavish expenditure on *langar* and charity. He had become quite popular among the people, including the merchants, travelers, high state officials and *umarā'*, who flocked his *khānqāh* to see him. More importantly, the disgruntled *umarā'*, who had lost their positions in the wake of the Khaljī Revolution, had rallied around him. Charged with treason, the Saiyyidī was arrested along with others, and a public trial was held at the court. He pleaded his innocence, and the Sultan vacillated in taking action against him, but the opponents of the Saiyyidī caused him to be trampled under the feet of the elephants. The action was taken without the approval of the Sultan at the order of his second son, Prince Arkalī Khān.¹⁵⁰ After his execution, the Sultan started believing in the powers and spiritual excellence of the Saiyyidī.¹⁵¹

Some historians maintain that Saiyyidī Muwallih was a disciple of Bābā Farīd,¹⁵² but this view is not corroborated by facts. Though he is said to have visited the *jamā'atkhānah* of Bābā Farīd at Ajōdhan, and had stayed there for a few days,¹⁵³ it appears that he did not enter the fold of discipleship in a formal sense by performing *bay'at* at the hand of the Shaykh. Moreover, Riazul Islam maintains that the Saiyyidī was spiritually associated with a Sufi group of *qalandar* variety known as *Muwallihs*,¹⁵⁴ as reflected in the post-fix of his name. Simon Digby has identified the *Muwallihs* among

¹⁵⁰ For an analysis, see Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, chap. 6, Appendix E, "The Tragic Case of Sidi Muwallih", pp. 298-307.

¹⁵¹ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 79.

¹⁵² Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India*, p. 57, and Qasimi, *Baba Fariduddin Masud Ganj-i-Shakar*, p. 50. Aziz Ahmad mistakenly assumes Saiyyidī Muwallih to be a "Chishtī dervish", if not a disciple of Bābā Farīd. Idem, "The Sufi and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India", p. 148.

¹⁵³ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 209.

¹⁵⁴ For details of Muwallih, see Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, pp. 321-22, n.201.

the four *bē-Shar'* (not conforming to *Shari'ah*) groups, the other three being *Qalandars*, *Haydarīs*, and *Juwāliqīs*,¹⁵⁵ which were distinguished from Chishtī *Silsilah*. The execution of Saiyyidī betrayed the party politics in the court of Delhi at that time. The incident must have sent shock waves in the Sufi circles, as it was first of its kind in the entire history of the Muslim rule in India, and must have compelled the Sufi circles to rethink their relationship with the high state officials, *umarā'*, and the Sultans, and made the Sufis more cautious in their dealings with them.

More than once, Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn sought permission from Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn to visit him but every time the Shaykh declined to allow him to come. Once the Sultan planned to visit the Shaykh without his prior permission, but the Sultan revealed the plan to Amīr Khursrau, who secretly informed the Shaykh about the surprise visit. When Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn came to know about it, he immediately left for Ajōdhan in order to avoid meeting the Sultan.¹⁵⁶ The Shaykh's decision to leave Delhi immediately also implies that he wanted to avoid any conflictual situation arising out of his refusal to see the Sultan.

Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn never accepted any land grant or *jāgīr* from his contemporary Sultans, *umarā'*, members of royal family or affluent people in order to retain his independence, especially as the court in Delhi was known for power politics in

¹⁵⁵ Simon Digby, "Qalandars and Related Groups: Elements of Social Deviance in the Religious Life of the Delhi Sultanate of the 13th and 14th Centuries" in *Islam in Asia*, ed. Friedmann, vol. 1, *South Asia*, p. 61; for details see pp. 60-108.

¹⁵⁶ When the Sultan came to know that Amīr Khursrau had informed the Shaykh about his surprise visit, he called an explanation of Amīr Khursrau, who replied: "In disobeying the Sultan, I stand in danger of loosing my head, but in disobeying the *Sultān al-Mashā'ikh*, I stand in danger of loosing my faith." The Sultan was pleased with his reply. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 135.

his days. As for the cash grants or *futūḥ*, on some occasions he did accept them, but disbursed the money immediately among the needy and the destitute without keeping a single *tankah* for himself. When Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī offered him a grant of a village, along with some cash grant or *futūḥ*, the Shaykh outrightly rejected the land grant.¹⁵⁷ As for the cash grant, the medieval records, such as *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, are silent. Riazul Islam, however, infers that the cash grant was quietly accepted as Bābā Farīd had done.¹⁵⁸ So if the cash *futūḥ* were accepted, it cannot be said to be a departure from the traditions of his preceptors, as Bābā Farīd had accepted the cash grant from Ulugh Khān Balban, the then *nā'ib-i mamlakat*. But, according to Nizami, in those days the practice of receiving *futūḥ* in the *jamā'atkhānah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' had not become customary, and the Shaykh seemed to have returned the cash *futūḥ* as well, along with the land grant, despite the fact that the inmates of his *jamā'atkhānah* had been starving for a long time.¹⁵⁹ The silence of medieval records cannot be taken to suggest that the cash grant was accepted, as inferred by Riazul Islam, but at the same time, it is also difficult to conclude that the *futūḥ* was rejected, as implied by Nizami. Though the receiving of *futūḥ* had not become customary till then, it might be an exceptional case of receiving the *futūḥ*.

Jamālī records that once some wealthy person of Gujarat sent two hundred and fifty *dīnār-i surkh* or gold coins to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn during the lifetime of Bābā

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁵⁸ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 244.

¹⁵⁹ Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 212.

Farīd. The Shaykh gave all of them to a *darvēsh* named Shu‘ayb.¹⁶⁰ What one can infer from the account of Jamālī is that occasionally *futūh* was received in the *jamā’ atkhānah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn even during the lifetime of his preceptor, but on some occasions, he did not accept it. For instance, according to Sijzī, a landlord once sent him some cash and the grant of two orchards. Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn turned down the offer saying: “None of the *mashā’ikh* of our *Silsilah* have done anything like that”.¹⁶¹ The account of Sijzī, however, does not explicitly inform that the cash grant was accepted, and so one may infer that in the utterance of the Shaykh, he had alluded to both kinds of grants. But most likely, the Shaykh had alluded to the land grant, which his preceptors never accepted, whereas the cash grants were at times accepted and at times rejected. Ḥamīd Qalandar and Jamālī inform that once Malik Talbughah presented one hundred *dinār-i surkh* to the Shaykh, but he refused to accept them. However, when the Shaykh noticed signs of sorrow and sadness on his face, he took only one coin from them in order to console him.¹⁶²

As indicated above by Nizami, the *futūh* started pouring in the *jamā’ atkhānah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ at a later stage, when it became a regular feature of the *jamā’ atkhānah*. According to Amīr Khūrd, the Shaykh was very particular about the distribution of *futūh*, and always ensured that they were distributed completely and

¹⁶⁰ The *darvēsh* had brought the prayer rug and cap of Bābā Farīd from Ajōdhan for him. Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 67.

¹⁶¹ Sijzī, *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*, pp. 170-71.

¹⁶² Qalandar, *Khair-u’l-Majalis*, p. 257, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 85. Qalandar and Jamālī have written the name of the Turkish Malik differently, but Jamāl Qiwām’s spellings (Talbughah Bughdah) seem to be correct. Idem, *Qiwām al-‘Aqā’id*, pp. 98-99. The Calcutta edition of Baranī’s *Tārikh-i Firūzshāhi* mentions only the name of Malik Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Talī’ah *Amīr-i Kōh*. p. 379. Nonetheless, two *umarā’* having the name of Taligha have been mentioned in Aligarh edition. Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Baranī, *Tārikh-i Firūzshāhi*, ed. Shaikh Abdur Rashid (Aligarh: Department of History, Muslim University, Aligarh, 1957), vol. II, pp. 210-11.

immediately after their receipt. On every Friday, he specifically used to ensure that the cells and stores in the *jamā' atkhānah* were emptied and cleaned.¹⁶³ Amīr Khūrd's record probably pertains to the later times when *futūḥ* had become a regular feature in the *jamā' atkhānah* of the Shaykh. Jamālī has also recorded the increase in *futūḥ* in the *jamā' atkhānah* of the Shaykh.¹⁶⁴ Since the popularity of the Shaykh had reached its zenith in the reign of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī, as indicated by Baranī,¹⁶⁵ it is most likely that the phenomenon of receiving *futūḥ* had also become regular in those days, and might have increased later.

In a nutshell, the relationship between Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn and Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī seems to be problem-free, as their relations were neither strained nor cordial. After a reign of six years, Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī was murdered in 1296, and his nephew, son-in-law and heir-apparent, 'Alā' al-Dīn, succeeded him.

4.6.2 Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī

According to many contemporary and near contemporary historians, Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī (r. 1296-1316) was responsible for the intrigue against the late Sultan, which culminated in the latter's execution.¹⁶⁶ If he was not directly responsible for the murder of the late Sultan, even then the tragic incident must have cast aspersions on the character

¹⁶³ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 131.

¹⁶⁴ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, pp. 67-69.

¹⁶⁵ See details of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's popularity and influence on the lives of the people in Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 343-46.

¹⁶⁶ For details, see *ibid*, pp. 228-35, and Al-Badāonī, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, (Ranking), vol. 1, p. 243. Lal also places the blame of the Sultan's murder on 'Alā' al-Dīn. *Idem*, *History of the Khaljis*, pp. 55-56. However, Niāzi concludes that the murder of Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī was a coincidence, and not pre-planned by 'Alā' al-Dīn. *Idem*, *The Life and Works of Sultan Alaaddin Khalji*, pp. 30-43.

of 'Alā' al-Dīn. Thus, from the very inception of his rule, Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī was confronted with the crisis of political legitimacy, and owing to it, he made attempts to win over *umarā'* and the influential people in Delhi by distributing huge sums of money and granting important posts and titles to *amīrs* like the earlier Sultans of Delhi.¹⁶⁷ By defeating the rival claimant to the throne and suppressing rebellious *amīrs* and their supporters, the Sultan consolidated his political authority and established himself firmly in the Sultanate. Shortly, the repeated Mongol invasions were also completely routed, and the territorial stretch of the Sultanate also began to extend day by day by successive conquests and annexations in Deccan and Rajputana.¹⁶⁸ Flushed with victories, the successful handling of the Mongol problem and the territorial expansion of the Sultanate, Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn became more ambitious and power-hungry. The character of the state gradually started undergoing a subtle change, as the Sultan started assuming absolute and unrestrained powers. The Sultan gave up consulting his advisers on matters of political import.¹⁶⁹ In addition, he sought to curtail the powers of the *umarā'* by various measures and regulations.¹⁷⁰ According to Baranī, Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī started cherishing the dream of becoming the 'Second Alexander'¹⁷¹ by large-scale territorial expansion, and also intended to introduce a new religion, but he was prevented from doing so by Malik 'Alā' al-Mulk, the *kōtwāl* of Delhi, who feared adverse reaction from the people.¹⁷² It

¹⁶⁷ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 71.

¹⁶⁸ For details of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn's wars with the Mongols and his military campaigns for expansionism, see Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, pp. 81-152.

¹⁶⁹ Habib, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 2, pp. 362-63.

¹⁷⁰ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 286-87.

¹⁷¹ Amīr Khusrau also calls Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn the 'Second Alexander'. Idem, *Khazā'in al-Futūh*, Eng. trans. Mohammad Habib, *The Campaigns of Ala'u'd-din Khilji Being Hazrat Amir Khusrau's Khaza'inul Futuh (Treasures of Victory)* (Bombay: D. B. Taraporewala, Sons and Co., 1931), pp. 3, 73.

¹⁷² For details, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 262-66. Here it is important to note that Baranī is generally considered the only contemporary historian to have recorded that the Sultan wanted to

shows that the Sultan, in addition to his temporal/political authority, wanted to extend his authority over the realm of religion as well. However, the Sultan was later persuaded for giving up the idea.

This raises a pertinent question: how could the Sultan tolerate Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn as a parallel source of authority in the Sultanate, especially close to the seat of the Sultanate in Delhi? Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn enjoyed immense popularity among all classes and sections of people, including the Muslim ruling elite of the Sultanate, and especially so in Delhi. Moreover, the growing hold of the Shaykh over the minds of the Muslim ruling elite was evident from the fact that many *umarā'* and close associates of the Sultan, as well as his family members, had become the disciples or devotees of the Shaykh.¹⁷³ Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's *jamā' atkhānah* was situated in Ghiyāthpur, a small village in the vicinity of Delhi, the seat of the Empire. The door of his *jamā' atkhānah* remained open till midnight for visitors, who thronged the place in great numbers. However, the Shaykh's actions and utterances never implied even a slight claim to political authority. What the Shaykh exercised over the people was the moral authority, which the Sultans of Delhi did not enjoy. The voluntary allegiance, unflinching loyalty and profound love of the people for Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn stood in sharp contrast to the political allegiance of the people towards the Sultanate and the Sultans of Delhi, which was involuntary and, in many cases, based on coercion.

introduce a new religion, and it is believed that this assertion is not found in any other authentic historiographical account. Therefore, some historians have challenged the authenticity of the statement as well. Hardēv's work, *Niẓāmī Bansarī*, seems to confirm Baranī's assertion, as it points out the Sultan's design of laying the foundation of a new religion. Idem, *Niẓāmī Bansarī*, p. 111. But as indicated earlier, *Niẓāmī Bansarī* seems to be an apocryphal work.

¹⁷³ See details of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's popularity and influence on the lives of the people in Baranī, *Tārikh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 343-46. See also Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 247.

It is significant that the various epithets which came to be used for the Shaykh included, *inter alia*, the titles of *Shāh-i Dīn* (the King of Religion),¹⁷⁴ *Sultān al-Awliyā'* (the King of Sufis), *Sultān al-Mashā'ikh* (the King of Shaykhs),¹⁷⁵ *Sultān al-'Ārifīn* (the King of Gnostics), *Shāh-i 'Ālam* (the King of the World), *Shāh-i Aurang* (the King of Throne), *Shahanshāh-i Aurang* (the Emperor of Throne),¹⁷⁶ and *Sultān Jī*. These epithets had overt political connotations, as the titles of *Sultān*, *Shāh* and *Shahanshāh* were reserved for kings and emperors. Moreover, the Shaykh was also referred to as *Shaykh al-Islām*,¹⁷⁷ which was, in fact, an official title bestowed by the Delhi Sultans on eminent Sufi Shaykhs. Though it was customary in the Sufi circles to use such lofty epithets for the eminent Sufi Shaykhs, it implied creating a level of authority parallel to the political authority. (See a list of real names and titles of the Chishtī Shaykhs in Appendix III) Commenting on these titles, Nizami observes that they “reflect deeper traits of medieval psyche... Medieval mind refused to accept greatness, grandeur and glory as the exclusive monopoly of the rulers. In the spiritual domain the Sufi masters held a position which was in no way less than the rulers in the political sphere. Nay, it was higher.”¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, such epithets might have created some ripples in political circles at that time.

¹⁷⁴ According to Amīr Khūrd, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn of Multan addressed the Shaykh as *Shāh-i Dīn*. Idem, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 139.

¹⁷⁵ Both the titles, *Sultān al-Awliyā'* and *Sultān al-Mashā'ikh* were used for the Shaykh by Amīr Khūrd and Jamālī. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 91-92, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 58. It is important to note that Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī (d. 1166) was titled *Sultān al-Awliyā'* (literally meaning the King of the Friends of God/the Sufis). For a detailed study, see Muhammad Riaz Qadiri, *The Sultan of the Saints: Mystical Life and Teachings of Shaikh Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani* (Gujranwala: Abbasi Publications, 2000).

¹⁷⁶ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 58, 60.

¹⁷⁷ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 341, Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 59, and Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, p. 75.

¹⁷⁸ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya*, pp. 122-23.

Historical evidence suggests that Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was perceived as a threat to the political authority by Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. Amīr Khūrd writes in *Siyar al-Awliyā’* that some people, who were jealous of the Shaykh’s popularity and the respect which he enjoyed, repeatedly poisoned the ears of the Sultan against the Shaykh. They suggested to the Sultan that his growing popularity might create political problems in the Sultanate. In order to gauge the Shaykh’s interest in the political affairs of the Sultanate, Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī wrote a letter to the Shaykh that the former wanted to consult the latter and seek his counsel on some state matters. The letter, which was meant to test the reaction of the Shaykh and ascertain his political designs, was taken by the Crown Prince, Khidr Khān, who was also his most favorite son, at the orders of the Sultan. It is significant to note that Khidr Khān was a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, and had constructed a mosque in the *jamā’atkhānah* of the Shaykh in Ghiyāthpur,¹⁷⁹ but he was unaware of his father’s plan. Upon receiving the Crown Prince in his *jamā’atkhānah*, the Shaykh, without opening the letter, curtly replied:

What have the *darvēshes* to do with the affairs of kings? I am a dervish, living in your city, and devote myself to praying for the welfare of the Muslims and the King. If the King says something further to me in this regard, I shall leave the place (and go elsewhere). The land of God is quite vast.¹⁸⁰

When the Sultan was communicated the reply of the Shaykh by the Crown Prince, he heaved a sigh of relief, as the reply contained an implicit message that the Shaykh was not interested in politics and state affairs. The Sultan said to the Crown Prince that he

¹⁷⁹ Saiyyid Aḥmad Khān, *Āthār al-Ṣanādīd* (Lucknow: Newal Kishore Press, 1876), p. 38. Cf. Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 73, which informs that the *jamā’atkhānah* was constructed by Khidr Khān. However, the statement of *Āthār al-Ṣanādīd* seems to be more correct.

¹⁸⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 133-34.

knew that the charge leveled against the Shaykh was baseless, but his (the King's) enemies wanted his relations with the 'people of God', i.e. the Sufis, to be strained, so that his kingdom be destroyed. Thus, having been assured of the Shaykh's detachment from political matters, the Sultan sent his apologies to the Shaykh.¹⁸¹

From this incident, one can infer that the Sultan had attempted to assess or test the frontiers of the space of the Chishtīs in the Sultanate of Delhi. With this purpose, he had wisely devised a ruse in order to ascertain the interests and political leanings of the Shaykh, instead of directly leveling a charge against the Shaykh. The incident of Saiyyidī Muwallih's execution must have been fresh in the memory of the people at the time, when despite Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī's clemency for the Saiyyidī, his opponents caused him to be trampled under the feet of the elephants without the sanction of the Sultan. Thus, Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn avoided any extreme action such as summoning the Shaykh to the court for an explanation, or holding a public trial, as was done in the case of the Saiyyidī.

According to Amīr Khūrd, after the above-mentioned incident, Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn repeatedly expressed his desire to see the Shaykh. Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, however, refused to oblige, and sent him a message: "There is no need for the Sultan to visit, for I am all the time engaged in praying for the Sultan *in absentia*, which is a more effective kind of prayer." However, the Sultan still wanted to come and see the Shaykh in person.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 134.

When the Sultan insisted, the Shaykh curtly remarked: "My house has two doors; if the Sultan enters by one door, I will leave the house by the other."¹⁸²

Referring to the attitude of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, Aziz Ahmad aptly remarks: "It was this complex of attitudes, the saint's splendour implying his spiritual sway over Muslim India and his contempt for the external head of the Muslim state, that led to something like a divided loyalty among Muslims...."¹⁸³ Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn did not allow any Sultan to visit his *jamā'atkhānah*, probably because he was aware of the consequences that had followed Ulugh Khān Balban's visit to Bābā Farīd's *jamā'atkhānah*. Since Shēr Khān, the warden of the marches and the governor of Multan, had enmity with Balban, the former created problems for Bābā Farīd, and his disciples and devotees. As a result of this, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn had become even more adamant that he would not allow any Sultan of Delhi to visit his *jamā'atkhānah*.

Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, nevertheless, avoided any untoward situation or any overt hostility with the political authorities. The Shaykh's message that he was engaged in praying for the Sultan was quite pragmatic, as otherwise the refusal to see the Sultan could be tantamount to inviting his wrath. Both the Sultan and the Shaykh were mindful of the incident of Saiyyidī Muwallih's execution under the previous regime. The Shaykh tactfully handled the situation, apparently without antagonizing the Sultan or leaving any

¹⁸² Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 135. Contrary to his own statement, Amīr Khūrd regretfully records elsewhere in his hagiographical work that the Sultan had never desired to see the Shaykh, nor had he invited the Shaykh to visit the court. p. 589. Thus, the two accounts of Amīr Khūrd are contradictory.

¹⁸³ Aziz Ahmad, "The Sufi and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India", p. 147.

room for hard feelings on the part of the latter. Consequently, the Sultan left the Shaykh undisturbed in his *jamā' atkhānah*.

The authenticity of the 'two-door story' has been questioned by some historians such as Riazul Islam. He cites counter-evidence from *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, where Baranī has claimed that Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn had never expressed any desire to see the Shaykh, though people used to come to the Shaykh in order to seek his blessings from far flung places.¹⁸⁴ Riazul Islam argues that if the Sultan had expressed any desire to see the Shaykh, Baranī would have recorded it.¹⁸⁵ The two-door account has been accepted by Eaton and Nizami.¹⁸⁶ On the contrary, Habib does not seem to be clear about its authenticity, as he initially rejected it in his work published in 1927, but later accepted it in 1946, only to reject it again in his work published in 1972.¹⁸⁷

Nizami has attempted to reconcile the two apparently contradictory accounts of Amīr Khūrd and Baranī. According to him, first, the authenticity of Amīr Khūrd's

¹⁸⁴ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 366.

¹⁸⁵ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, pp. 245, 310, n.31.

¹⁸⁶ Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur (1300-1700)*, p. 46, and Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 272-73. However, in the Introduction to Bruce Lawrence's translation of *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, Nizami contends that the incident has mistakenly been placed in the reign of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn, which should be placed in Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī's reign. Nizam Ad-Din Awliya, *Morals for the Heart*, Nizami's Introduction, pp. 35, 55, n.138. However, Riazul Islam has mistakenly attributed the introduction and the note in "Morals for the Heart" to Bruce Lawrence. Idem, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 310, n.31. See also Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya*, p. 105, where he places the story in Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī's reign, contrary to his earlier assertion, where he places the story in Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn's reign. Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 272-73.

¹⁸⁷ Mohammad Habib, *Hazrat Amir Khusrau of Delhi* (Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala and Co., 1927), and Idem, "Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh-i-Dehli as a Great Historical Personality", *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, Deccan, vol. 20 (April 1946), pp. 129-53. Both reappeared in idem, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, pp. 309, 365. Habib's biography of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn was based on his lecture (The Nizām Annual Lecture in Urdu), delivered at Delhi University in 1970, which was published in 1972. According to Habib, it is improbable that the Shaykh had said that he prayed for the King. Habib, *Haḍrat Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā'*, pp. 110-11. If the Shaykh had said so, his reply can be interpreted as 'tactical' or 'politically correct'.

account cannot be challenged, for he would not dare to attribute an inauthentic utterance to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, as Amīr Khūrd's father was a disciple of the Shaykh; secondly, the attitude of the Shaykh towards the Sultan is consistent with his general attitude towards other Sultans of Delhi; and lastly, Nizami asks whether Baranī's statement that people from far flung areas used to visit the Shaykh by 'countless means and ways,' can be interpreted as suggesting that after the refusal of the Shaykh to grant an audience to the Sultan, the latter did not try to see him by other means or methods?¹⁸⁸ Nizami's arguments and interpretation carry considerable weight, and the two apparently conflicting accounts of Amīr Khūrd and Baranī seem to be reconciled. But the two contradictory statements of Amīr Khūrd,¹⁸⁹ mentioned above, seem difficult to reconcile.

According to *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī was particularly curious about the functioning of the *jamā'atkhānah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn and its expenditure, as the *langar* was very extensive and a huge amount of wealth was distributed in charity. In order to inquire into these, the Sultan once sent a *mukhbir* (spy or secret news reporter) to the *jamā'atkhānah*. When the Shaykh came to know about his presence, he ordered that another dish should be added in the day's menu, thereby making a statement about the extent of the expenditure and resources of the *jamā'atkhānah*. When the incident was reported to the Sultan, he was displeased, but he remained composed. The displeasure of the Sultan was, however, soon reported to the Shaykh, who again ordered that some more dishes should be added in the menu of the midnight meals or *sahri* (food taken at midnight before observing a fast). These

¹⁸⁸ Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehli kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 273, n.1-2.

¹⁸⁹ See note 182 in this chap. (supra).

developments were also reported to the Sultan, but this time he did not react, and stopped pressing the matter further.¹⁹⁰ This suggests that the Sultan's curiosity and suspicion gradually waned. According to Jamāl Qiwām, after the incident, the Sultan became a devotee of the Shaykh, and also requested the Shaykh to accept his sons, Khiḍr Khān and Shādī Khān, as his disciples. The Shaykh accepted them but after considerable hesitation.¹⁹¹ The same source also informs that two wives of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn were also the devotees of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn.¹⁹²

According to many primary sources, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn extended help to Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn on some occasions.¹⁹³ Regarding the conquest of Warrangal, we have

¹⁹⁰ Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, pp. 91-92.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 93. According to *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, after the two Princes had become the Shaykh's disciples, they arranged a feast in Ghiyāth pur with the permission of the Shaykh, which the Shaykh also attended and *samā'* was also organized there. pp. 93-94. Cf. Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arifin*, p. 73 for another occasion when Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn ordered one of his *amirs* to take his sons to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn and get them enrolled as his disciples.

¹⁹² The Queen, *Malikah-'i Jahān*, who was the mother of Khiḍr Khān and Shādī Khān, once asked his sons to request the Shaykh to grant her some token of blessing. Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn granted some pieces of bread for the Queen. Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, pp. 85-86. Similarly, another wife of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn, who was the daughter of Sultan Mu'izz al-Dīn Kēqubād, was also a devotee of the Shaykh. When she was in a family way, she prayed to God to have a babyboy, and vowed that if a boy were born to her, she would not lift the child from the ground until he was lifted by one of the servants of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn. Therefore, when a babyboy was born to her, her vow was fulfilled by a disciple of the Shaykh, who was a resident of Meerut. See details in Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁹³ One such occasion is mentioned in *Nizāmī Bansarī*. The account runs as follows: The *kōtwāl* of Delhi, Malik 'Alā' al-Mulk, who was a disciple or a devotee of the Shaykh, had prevented the Sultan from introducing a new religion and declaring his own prophethood. When the *kōtwāl* came to the *jamā'atkhānah* of the Shaykh, the latter praised the *kōtwāl* for his courage and intrepidity in dissuading the Sultan from implementing his plan. The *kōtwāl* replied that it was all because of the blessings of the Shaykh, and he had done so in accordance with what the Shaykh had advised him to do. Moreover, the Shaykh sent a magical kerchief to the Sultan through the same *kōtwāl* of Delhi. The kerchief could enable the Sultan to have an insight into the conditions and problems of his subjects through supernatural means. However, the Sultan is said to have misused it, after which the Shaykh asked the Sultan to use it properly, and keep the knowledge of the problems and conditions of the people to himself. Hardēv, *Nizāmī Bansarī*, pp. 111-13. The account in *Nizāmī Bansarī* suggests that the *kōtwāl* had previously discussed the matter with Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', who had advised him to preempt the plan of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī by discouraging and condemning it. Thus, the Shaykh seems to have played a crucial role in lobbying against the imperial design of initiating a new religion and claiming prophethood.

two versions of the same account in Baranī's *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī* and Jamāl Qiwām's *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*. According to Baranī, when the Sultan received no news about his army sent to Warrangal, he sent a message to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn through Malik Qarā Bēg (who was a disciple of the Shaykh) and Qāḍī Mughīth al-Dīn, and requested the Shaykh to use his intuition and give some information about his army. The Sultan also instructed them to report back every word spoken by the Shaykh in verbatim. When they met the Shaykh, the latter said: "This conquest is of little worth, we expect greater conquests than this one." When the Shaykh's reply was communicated to the Sultan, he rejoiced at the conquest of Warrangal, and took the Shaykh's utterances as a prediction of more conquests in future. Baranī further informs that after some time when the news of the conquest of Warrangal reached the Sultan, his belief in the spiritual powers of the Shaykh was further strengthened.¹⁹⁴ Jamālī informs that when the news of the conquest of Warrangal reached the Sultan, he sent five hundred gold coins (*surkh dīnār*) to the Shaykh through Qarā Bēg. The Shaykh accepted the *futūḥ*, and granted the entire sum to a *qalandar* named Isfundyār from Khurasan.¹⁹⁵

As mentioned earlier, the historical authenticity of *Nizāmī Bansarī* is dubious. The account seems inauthentic on several grounds: first, it is improbable that immediately after the Sultan gave up his plan of introducing a new religion, the Shaykh began to trust him, and their mutual relationship reached this level of comfort; secondly, the whole life of the Shaykh is exemplified by aloofness from the court and kings, and it seems unlikely that the Shaykh had extended this kind of help to the Sultan; and lastly, the magical kerchief story is not mentioned in any other contemporary or near contemporary source such as *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, and *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*.

¹⁹⁴ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 331-32. Also see a similar version in Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Tālib), vol. 1, pp. 401-2. However, according to Jamālī, the Sultan had wished the Shaykh to come to his court or palace. Moreover, the Shaykh had predicted the conquest of Warrangal in quite explicit manner, contrary to Baranī's account. Idem, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 77-78. It is important to recall that Jamālī had quite often used Baranī as his source, but he seems to have 'added' details to certain incidents, which might be based on hearsay or inauthentic sources, which he does not mention.

¹⁹⁵ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 78.

The same account in *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id* runs as follows: instead of the two above-mentioned *umarā'*, it was Mawlānā Ḥamīd al-Dīn, *Ṣadr-i Jahān* (the Prime Minister), who was sent to the Shaykh by the Sultan. Moreover, the Shaykh narrated an anecdote, which stated in an implicit manner that the news about the army would reach after forty days. However, the *Ṣadr-i Jahān* could not understand the Shaykh's message, but the clever Sultan immediately interpreted the anecdote and understood what the Shaykh meant.¹⁹⁶

It is important to note that the account of Baranī has been rejected by Habib, as he writes that Amīr Khusrau's *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* informs that in those days, Malik Qarā Bēg (or Qarā Bakk) was on the same military campaign in Warangal, and therefore, not present in Delhi. So it was impossible for the Malik to visit the Shaykh carrying the Sultan's message. Moreover, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* and *Khayr al-Majālis* clearly state that Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn never uttered a single word in appreciation or condemnation of these conquests. Therefore, the account is apocryphal.¹⁹⁷ It may be pointed out here that Habib had not consulted *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id* while writing the biography of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, which narrates the same incident in a different manner. *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*'s account seems neutral regarding the conquests and annexations of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn, and hence, more acceptable. To conclude, Jamāl Qiwām's account deserves more credence than the version of Baranī, who had relied on his failing memory to write his *Tārikh-i Firūzshāhī* at an old age.

¹⁹⁶ For details, see Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁹⁷ Ḥabīb, *Ḥadrat Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'*, pp. 109-10.

Nonetheless, it is strange that Amīr Khusrau, who was a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, does not mention the Shaykh's role in the entire episode.¹⁹⁸ Here it must be remembered that in his prose-work, *Khazā'in al-Futūh*, which is an official history of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn's military campaigns, Khusrau has unduly praised the Sultan, confining himself to the narration of the Sultan's victories, and not mentioning the defeats or moments of anxiety or fear for defeat in the battle-fields.

During the reign of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn, the Mongols, under their leader Ṭarghī, invaded India and besieged Delhi in 1302/3. However, the Mongols lifted the siege and retreated without fighting or plundering.¹⁹⁹ The authentic historical sources are silent why the Mongols withdrew. Baranī only mentions that the Mongols under Ṭarghī returned owing to the supplications of the poor and the helpless (*maskīnān*).²⁰⁰ He does not specifically mention the name of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, though he writes elsewhere that the security of the Sultanate and the successful military expeditions during the reign of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn were due to the presence, blessings and prayers of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'.²⁰¹ However, according to Farishtah, the Sultan sought help from Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', and the Mongol army retreated the next day. The people of Delhi took it as a miracle of the Shaykh.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ See the details of Warrāngal Campaign in Amīr Khusrau, *Khazā'in al-Futūh*, pp. 56-79.

¹⁹⁹ For details of the invasion, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 300-302. See also Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, pp. 140-43.

²⁰⁰ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 302.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

²⁰² Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. 1, p. 382.

According to *Nizāmī Bansarī*, when the Sultan was apprised of the invasion, he sent a message to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn through the Crown Prince, Khiḍr Khān, Malik Nuṣrat and Amīr Khusrau, and asked for the prayers and blessings of the Shaykh for averting the imminent danger. In reply, while conveying his prayers for the Sultan, the Shaykh assured him that the Mongol army would retreat the next day. Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn had sent one of his disciples, who was ethnically a Mongol, to Ṭarghī and asked him to retreat. The following day the Mongols lifted the siege and withdrew. After it, Khiḍr Khān, Malik Nuṣrat and Amīr Khusrau again went to the *jamā' atkhānah* of the Shaykh to convey the gratitude of the Sultan, along with a huge quantity of gems and pearls as a token of his gratefulness. The Shaykh accepted the offering, but soon afterwards bestowed it upon a poor *darvēsh*, who was present in the crowd.²⁰³ The account of *Nizāmī Bansarī* cannot be accepted uncritically, as the historical authenticity of the source is dubious, and the account is not corroborated by any other contemporary or near contemporary source. As for Farishtah, it is a latter-day source.

According to Jamālī, once Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn asked one of his *umarā'*, Malik Qarā Bēg, who used to attend the *samā'* gatherings of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, to inform him about the verses which caused the Shaykh to fall into *wajd* or spiritual ecstasy. The Malik noted down the verses and presented them to the Sultan, who read them again and again, and rubbed the paper on his eyes as a gesture of devotion. Upon seeing the Sultan, the Malik urged him to see the Shaykh in person. The Sultan replied: "Being a King, I am engrossed in worldly affairs and wrongdoings from head to toe. I feel hesitation in

²⁰³ For details, see Hardēv, *Nizāmī Bansarī*, pp. 77-83.

meeting the Shaykh, who is chaste and austere. However, take my two sons, Khiḍr Khān and Shādī Khān to the Shaykh, and get them enlisted as the Shaykh's disciples. Also take the *futūḥ* of two lac *tankahs* with you for the poor *darvēshes* of his *khānqāh*.”²⁰⁴ So it can be inferred from Jamālī's account that the Sultan had never met the Shaykh, although he held the Shaykh in high esteem. However, Jamālī is silent regarding the acceptance or rejection of *futūḥ* by the Shaykh, but if the Shaykh had rejected it, Jamālī would have recorded it.

Jamālī also informs that once Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn sent fifty-thousand *dinārs* to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn through his *ḥājib* (chamberlain), Muḥammad Kātib, who was a disciple of the Shaykh.²⁰⁵ Though the account is somewhat vague like the earlier one, it appears from the discussion that took place in the *jamā'atkhānah* that the Shaykh had refused to accept the cash *futūḥ* from the Sultan. As mentioned above, the Shaykh seems to have accepted the *futūḥ* sent after the retreat of the Mongol army, but this time it was rejected. Nizām al-Dīn Bakhshī records that the Sultan used to send *futūḥ* to the Shaykh and seek his assistance.²⁰⁶ On one occasion, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn accepted the gift of a rosary from Crown Prince, Khiḍr Khān, but when he came to know that it was made of precious gems, he threw it away.²⁰⁷ To conclude, the attitude of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn regarding cash grants and offerings or *futūḥ* from the Sultans of Delhi varied depending

²⁰⁴ Jamālī, *Siyar al-Ārifin*, p. 73. The amount of *futūḥ* presented by the Sultan seems to be exaggerated. Cf. Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, p. 93, for another occasion when Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn ordered one of his *amīrs* to take his sons to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn and get them enrolled as his disciples.

²⁰⁵ Jamālī, *Siyar al-Ārifin*, p. 72.

²⁰⁶ Bakhshī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, p. 82.

²⁰⁷ Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, p. 102.

on the occasion, and only on some important and significant occasions did he accept the cash *futūh*.

During the twenty years of the reign of Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, his ideas, preferences and predilections seem to manifest considerable shifts. After overcoming the initial difficulties, and consolidating his rule, he undertook some successful military expeditions. He became more assertive and self-assured, and even harbouring ambitious of becoming a world-conqueror and founding a new religion. It was probably in these early years that the Sultan fell in with the opponents of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, who poisoned him against the Shaykh. The Sultan then felt the need to assess and ascertain the interest of the Shaykh in political affairs. Nevertheless, the aspirations and ideas of the Sultan seem to have changed again, when he gave up his unrealistic ambitions.

Regarding the nature of relations between Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn and Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, Baranī informs that though the Sultan had never met the Shaykh, the former had never uttered anything against the latter during his entire reign. Historical evidence suggests that even after having a clear idea of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn’s lack of interest in political matters, the Sultan’s ears were consistently poisoned by the opponents of the Shaykh regarding the amount of cash *futūh* received in the *jamā’ atkhānah* of the Shaykh, the multitude of people thronging to seek his blessings, and the extent and scale of charity and *langar* at the *jamā’ atkhānah*. However, Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn did not pay any heed to the mischief-mongers any more. It was probably during the last years of his reign that the Sultan’s devotion for the Shaykh had become profound. Baranī states that during the last

years of his life, the Sultan had become a sincere devotee of the Shaykh, despite the fact that they both had never met.²⁰⁸ Nizami²⁰⁹ and Lal²¹⁰ also maintain that during his last days, the Sultan had become greatly devoted to the Shaykh. It was owing to Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn's devotion for Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn that some historians have mistakenly assumed that the Sultan was a disciple of the Shaykh,²¹¹ but according to Nizami, such a view cannot be accepted, as it is not corroborated by any contemporary court chronicle or hagiographical literature.²¹²

Habib is of the opinion that Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn and Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn enjoyed very cordial relations with each other. He argues that the Sultan commanded considerable respect in the *jamā'atkhānah* of the Shaykh due to his social reforms.²¹³ However, according to the available data, it can be safely inferred that they enjoyed normal relations, but they cannot be characterized as cordial or friendly. In short, what one gathers from varied historical accounts is that the relationship between the two was a comfortable one, as the Sultan used to seek the assistance and blessings of the Shaykh in difficult situations, such as the military campaign in Warrangal and the Mongol invasion under Ṭarghī.

²⁰⁸ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 332, 345-46.

²⁰⁹ Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 264-65. See also Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn's relations with other contemporary Sufi Shaykhs, pp. 267-70.

²¹⁰ Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, p. 274.

²¹¹ Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam: A History of the Evolution and Ideals of Islam with a Life of the Prophet* (Karachi: Elite Publishers, 1988 rpt., first published 1922), p. 388, n.1.

²¹² Nizāmī also rejects the view that Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn was a disciple of Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar, as maintained by Muḥammad Ghauthī Māndavī and Ghulām Sarwar. Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 275, n.2. See also Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 101, and Sarwar, *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā'*, vol. I, p. 327.

²¹³ Habib, *Ḥaḍrat Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā'*, pp. 111-12.

4.6.3 Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī

During the last days of Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī, his lieutenant and most favourite confidant, Malik Nā’ib Kāfūr, had started exercising undue influence in the affairs of the state. After the death of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, Kāfūr disinherited Khiḍr Khān, the Crown Prince, and instead placed Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Umar, a minor son of the late Sultan on the throne, himself becoming his regent. After a few weeks, however, Kāfūr was murdered by the supporters of the family of the late Sultan, who enthroned another son of the late Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn named Mubārak Khaljī. The new king, assuming the title of Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī (r. 1316-20), ruled the Sultanate for over four years. Under him, one of his favourites, a so-called low-caste slave convert named Ḥasan, titled Khusrau Khān, rose to a position of power, and eventually became his *wazīr*, much to the chagrin of the *umarā’* of the Sultanate.²¹⁴

The reign of Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak is considered to be perhaps the ‘most difficult period’ of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn’s life,²¹⁵ as the relationship of the Sultan and the Shaykh gradually deteriorated during his reign. In fact, Khiḍr Khān and Shādī Khān, the two brothers of the reigning Sultan, were disciples of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, and very dear and close to the Shaykh. As pointed out above, Khiḍr Khān had been nominated as heir-apparent by Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī, but during the ascendancy of Malik Kāfūr, both the brothers were blinded so as to physically disqualify them from assuming the office of the Sultan of Delhi. Nonetheless, when Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī ascended the throne, his brothers Khiḍr Khān, Shādī Khān and Shihāb al-Dīn were

²¹⁴ For details, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 381-82, and Al-Badāonī, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, (Ranking), vol. 1, pp. 272-74.

²¹⁵ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 245.

executed on his orders in 1318.²¹⁶ According to Nizami, during the years 1315-19, which was a period of alarming political developments, Ḥasan Sijzī had recorded sixty-two conversations of the Shaykh. It is difficult to ascertain any reaction of the Shaykh to these political developments, especially to the execution of the princes.²¹⁷

Like his predecessors, the authority of Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak also lacked political legitimacy, which compelled him to undertake measures to lend some degree of legality to his rule. For the purpose of winning over the *umarā'*, he conferred titles on them, and offered high positions to them, particularly those who had sided with him in the struggle for power.²¹⁸ The new Sultan adopted an attitude of insolence and hostility towards the Shaykh. Since the late Crown Prince was a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', the Sultan became a disciple of a Suhrawardī Sufi, Shaykh Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Rūmī.²¹⁹ The Sultan seems to have done so out of political expediency, and that was why he remained unaffected by the teachings and the high ideals of Shaykh Ḍiyā' al-Dīn. Nizami also observes that there does not seem to have been any impact of Shaykh Rūmī's teachings on the character of the Sultan,²²⁰ as the Sultan's decision to become a disciple of a Suhrawardī Sufi was more informed by pragmatic considerations than motivated by

²¹⁶ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 393-94.

²¹⁷ Nizami continues: "The Shaikh never discussed political events in his assemblies. Rulers came to the throne and disappeared; princes struggled for succession; nobles won and lost the confidence of the rulers, but the Shaikh never looked at this kaleidoscopic drama of their rise and fall." Idem, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya*, p. 114.

²¹⁸ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 82-83.

²¹⁹ Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq's statement that the Sultan was a disciple as well as *khalīfah* of Shaykh Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Rūmī seems to be incorrect. Idem, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, p. 79. The Sultan was a disciple of the Shaykh, but probably he was not granted *khīlafat*.

²²⁰ According to Niẓāmī, if Shaykh Rūmī is considered to be a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, the age of the former must be more than hundred years at that time. Idem, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 287. Therefore, it is difficult to assume that Shaykh Rūmī could play any active role in the character-building of the Sultan after enrolling him as a disciple.

conviction. Though the Chishtī and Suhrawardī *Silsilahs* were not 'rivals' in any sense, and there was no mutual hostility between the two *Silsilahs*, the Sultan thought it prudent to enlist himself as a disciple of a Suhrawardī Shaykh. By doing so, the Sultan not only aimed at countering his opponents and rivals, who were the supporters of the late Crown Prince, but also attempted to secure the support of the Suhrawardī Sufis for his otherwise illegitimate regime.

According to Amīr Khūrd, some confidants, advisers and close associates of Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak were against Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, and they were the source of all trouble.²²¹ The contemporary historian Baranī informs that the name of the Shaykh was dishonored at the court, and the Sultan harboured a personal grudge against the Shaykh.²²² The Sultan also invited the Suhrawardī Sufi, *Shaykh al-Islām* Rukn al-Dīn Abū 'l-Faṭḥ of Multan (d. 1334), the grandson of Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā, to Delhi.²²³ Moreover, the Sultan also thought of constructing a magnificent *khānqāh* in Delhi so that people could turn to it instead of visiting Ghiyāthpur. This shows how the Sultan not only tried to muster support against Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', but also sought the assistance of the Suhrawardī leadership for countering the popularity of the Shaykh in Delhi. Nevertheless, it should not lead one to assume that there existed any competition or rivalry between the Chishtī and Suhrawardī leadership; they had enjoyed cordial and friendly relations, and used to frequently meet each other as well.²²⁴ When

²²¹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 590. One of them was Qāḍī Muḥammad Ghaznavī. Jamālī, *Siyar al-Ārifīn*, p. 74.

²²² Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 396.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ For details of the meetings between the two Shaykhs, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 136-41.

Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn was about to arrive in Delhi, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was the first person to go out of the city to greet and welcome him. Later, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn got some indication of the intentions of the Sultan, and therefore, when the Sultan inquired from him who met him first in Delhi, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn replied that the one who was the best of all, i.e. Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn.²²⁵ Having been disappointed from Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn, the Sultan invited Shaykhzādah Ḥussām al-Dīn Jām (or Farjām) to Delhi, who was known for his hostility to the Shaykh,²²⁶ and constructed a *khānqāh* for him in Delhi as well. However, it could not attract devotees and visitors like the *jamā'atkhānah* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn in Ghiyāthpur. It was owing to his hostility for Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn that the Sultan made the Shaykhzādah one of his close associates.

The author of *Gulzār-i Abrār* informs that Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn once ordered to expel Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn from the Sultanate of Delhi. However, before the orders were executed, the Sultan fell seriously ill, and the mother of the Sultan went to the *khānqāh* of the Shaykh and sought forgiveness on the behalf of his son.²²⁷ Hagiographical literature reveals that the opponents of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn kept trying to create misunderstanding between the Shaykh and the Sultan. According to *Khayr al-Majālis*, once an opponent of the Shaykh told Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak that though the Shaykh had declined to accept the gifts and offerings from the Sultan, but he had no compunction in accepting the *futūḥ* sent by the *umarā'*. Upon hearing this, the Sultan ordered that the *umarā'* be prevented from visiting the Shaykh in order to stop the *futūḥ*. In response, the Shaykh ordered that the expenditure of his *langar* should be doubled. When the Sultan

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 136, and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 71.

²²⁶ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 396, and Amūr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 590.

²²⁷ See details in Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, pp. 59-60.

was apprised of the Shaykh's response, the former regretted his action.²²⁸ The account of *Khayr al-Majālis* implies that the Sultan must have sent some offerings to the Shaykh, which the latter might have turned down. By sending the *futūḥ* to the Shaykh, the Sultan had attempted to secure the support of the Chishtī leadership for his regime, but when he learnt that his *futūḥ* was not accepted, which implied a refusal to extend support and legality to the regime, the Sultan got upset. Probably one of the reasons for the Shaykh's refusal to accept the *futūḥ* was that the two brothers of the Sultan, who were executed by him, were his disciples, and one of them, Khiḍr Khān, was quite close to him. The Shaykh might have been personally aggrieved owing to the ruthless execution of the two brothers along with their families. Moreover, the Shaykh must have had a fair idea of the haughty and vindictive temperament of the Sultan, but he preferred to face the consequences than to accept the *futūḥ* from him.

Though Jamālī refers to the same incident, probably taken from *Khayr al-Majālis*, his account slightly differs from it.²²⁹ In addition to the details provided by Qalanadar,

²²⁸ Qalandar, *Khayr-u'l-Majālis*, p. 258. Jamāl Qiwām informs that an *amīr* of Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak named Talbughah Bughdah presented one hundred gold *tankaḥs* to the Shaykh, but he refused to accept them. On the *amīr*'s insistence, he took only one coin. Idem, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, p. 99. One reason for not accepting the offering might be that the Shaykh did not want the Sultan or his *umarā'* to think that his *langar* was run by their offerings.

²²⁹ Jamālī writes that Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn once inquired about the resources of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn's *jamā'atkhānah* and *langar* from Qādī Muḥammad Ghaznavī. When he was told that the *umarā'* offered cash *futūḥ* to the Shaykh, he ordered that the property of all those *umarā'* who presented or sent *futūḥ* to the Shaykh be confiscated in future. He also banned the *umarā'* from visiting the Shaykh's *jamā'atkhānah*. These measures were aimed at reducing the resources of the *jamā'atkhānah* collected through *futūḥ*, and thereby compelling the Shaykh to discontinue the practice of *langar* or public kitchen. In those days, the daily expenditure of the Shaykh's *jamā'atkhānah* (including charity and *langar*) was estimated to be around two thousand *tankaḥs*. When the news of the royal decree reached the Shaykh, he ordered his attendant Khwājah Iqbāl to double the expenditure of the *langar*, and also indicated to him a *ṭāq* (a shelf or a recess in the wall) from where he could get the required amount of money. When the Sultan came to know about it, he regretted his action. Idem, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, p. 74. Nizāmī adds a note of caution here that Jamālī has borrowed this information from

Jamālī informs that the Sultan complained to the Shaykh that Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn came to see him (the Sultan) from Multan, whereas Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, who lived in Delhi, did not come to meet him. The Sultan also ordered the Shaykh to personally come to the court. The Shaykh tactfully replied: "I'm a recluse, and do not go anywhere. Moreover, it was not a custom of my spiritual preceptors to visit courts and sit in the company of kings. You should excuse me for it."²³⁰ In this way, the Shaykh tried to extricate himself from the situation in a tactful manner, but the relationship of the Sultan and the Shaykh seems to have deteriorated after these incidents. It was probably after the Shaykh's refusal to see the Sultan that the latter eventually issued a *farmān* (royal edict) declaring that whoever brings the head of the Shaykh would be rewarded. Along with it, the head money of one thousand gold *tankahs* for the Shaykh was also announced.²³¹ When the hostility of the Sultan towards the Shaykh reached its climax, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn sent a message to Shaykh Diyā' al-Dīn Rūmī, the Sultan's preceptor, through Khwājah Ḥasan Sijzī to prevent his disciple from creating troubles for him. But when Khwājah Ḥasan reached his home, Shaykh Rūmī was on his death bed, and expired after a few days.²³² Thus, the message could never be conveyed to the Sultan through his preceptor.

On the occasion of the *fātiḥa* (prayer for the deceased) of Shaykh Rūmī, where the Sultan and his *umarā'* were already present, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn also went to

Khayr al-Majālis, but he has added some details in the above-cited incidents. Idem, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 291.

²³⁰ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 74.

²³¹ According to Baranī, the Sultan had made such announcements a number of times in drunkenness. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 396. In fact, Baranī has not related the head money announcement to the incident of banning the visits of the *umarā'* and presenting *futūḥ* to the Shaykh. Cf. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 590.

²³² Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, pp. 74-75.

participate in the prayer. When the Shaykh entered the place, people stood up in respect for him. Upon seeing the devotion of the people for Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, the Sultan was further enraged.²³³ The immense popularity of the Shaykh among the people was an eye sore to the Sultan from the very beginning. According to Baranī, the Sultan did not return the *salām* (greetings) of the Shaykh, and showed indifference towards him.²³⁴

Amīr Khūrd records that once Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn told the participants of his *majlis* that he had met Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak on a certain occasion, and briefly conversed with him. The Shaykh narrated to the Sultan the following *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH): “Whoever would sit in the company of anybody even for a while would be interrogated by God whether he had fulfilled the obligation to God in that company”.²³⁵ This *ḥadīth* implied that on the Day of Judgment, the Sultan would be inquired about the fulfillment of the obligation of sitting in the company of his mentor, Shaykh Rūmī. The Sultan and the Shaykh must have run into each other, since it is highly improbable that against the traditions of his *Silsilah*, the Shaykh had ever visited his court or palace, or the Sultan had visited his *jamā‘atkhānah*. The conversation might have taken place on the occasion of the *fātiḥa* of Shaykh Rūmī, or on some similar occasion. However, Amīr Khūrd’s account does not mention any bitterness between the two at their meeting.

²³³ Ibid., p. 75.

²³⁴ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 396. The account of their meeting has variously been described. Jamālī, for instance, informs that the Shaykh himself refrained from greeting the Sultan, and explained it by saying that since the Sultan was busy in reciting the Quran, there was no need of interrupting him. Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Arīfīn*, p. 75. Since Jamālī is a later source, the statement of Baranī deserves more credence.

²³⁵ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 558.

Jamāl Qiwām informs that in a state of intoxication, once Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak asked one of his *umarā'*, Malik Talbughah Bughdah, to take off his cap, which was a symbol of his being a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn. The Sultan asked him thrice, and took out his sword as well, but the *amīr* refused to comply with his orders. Greatly impressed by his steadfastness and devotion for his mentor, the Sultan raised the emoluments of the *amīr* and bestowed on him a robe of honour as a reward.²³⁶ However, this incident cannot be taken to mean that at any stage during his reign, the Sultan was favourably inclined towards the Shaykh, for this incident happened when the Sultan was drunk.

According to hagiographers, two issues were responsible for further antagonizing Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak against the Shaykh. First, the Sultan built a new mosque in Delhi—*Masjid-i Mīrī*, and invited all the '*ulamā'* and the Sufis to offer the Friday congregation prayers in the mosque. However, the Shaykh replied that he would offer the Friday prayers in a nearby mosque, as it had greater claim on him, and thus, refused to attend the inaugural ceremony. Secondly, it was customary among the '*ulamā'*, *mashā'ikh* and *imāms* to visit the court in person and felicitate the Sultan on the first day of every lunar month. Nevertheless, the Shaykh always used to send his representative named Iqbal—the *khādīm-i khāṣṣ* (personal attendant) of the Shaykh—to the royal court instead of making a personal appearance. The Sultan was provoked by some of his confidants and close associates to ask the Shaykh to appear in person at the next ceremony, and failing to do so, the Shaykh was to be forced to come. The Sultan also sent Saiyyid Quṭb al-Dīn Ghaznavī, Shaykh 'Imād al-Dīn Ṭūsī, Shaykh Wahīd al-Dīn,

²³⁶ Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, pp. 98-99.

Mawlānā Burhān al-Dīn and others to the Shaykh to persuade him to appear in the court, but the Shaykh refused to comply with the official orders, and remained adamant. As the ceremony drew closer, the anxiety among the populace of Delhi and the disciples and devotees of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn increased. In the words of Nizami, it caused a “civic commotion” in the city.²³⁷ Nonetheless, the Shaykh remained composed and calm. On the eve of the ceremony, the Sultan was murdered by his favourite, Khusrau Khān, who usurped the throne of Delhi by assuming the office of the Sultan.²³⁸ It is important to note that the enmity and hostility of Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak towards the Shaykh was personal in nature, and the basis of the contention was by no means ideological or theological in character.

4.6.4 Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Khusrau Shāh

Khusrau Khān, who had murdered Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak, ascended the throne of Delhi with the title Nāṣir al-Dīn. Thus began the brief reign of Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Khusrau (r. 1320), which lasted for a little more than four months. The Sultan was confronted with a crisis of legitimacy, which was more intense and acute in his case, as he was a usurper, and moreover, he did not come from the ethnic groups which formed the ruling elite, which were Turkish, Tajik and Khaljīs. As indicated earlier, he was originally a low-caste Hindu of Gujrat, who had converted to Islam and eventually raised to the position of *wazīr* under Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak.

²³⁷ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u 'd-din Auliya*, p. 118.

²³⁸ For a detailed account, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 150-51, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Arīfīn*, pp. 75-77. See more details in Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 401-9, and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 85-86.

Upon assuming the rule, Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Khusrau distributed huge sums of money among the ‘*ulamā*’, Sufis and *mashā’ikh* in order to win them over and secure their support for his rule. He also sent five hundred thousand *tankahs* to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn as well. The cash grant sent to the Shaykh by the new Sultan was accepted by him, but immediately distributed among the people, without keeping a single *tankah* for himself or for the *langar*.²³⁹ It is important to recall that during the reign of the previous Sultan, Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī, the Shaykh had turned down the cash *futūḥ* sent by him, which had enraged the latter, and in order to avenge, the Sultan had prohibited his *umarā*’ from visiting the Shaykh’s *jamā’atkhānah* and sending offerings to him. The refusal of the Shaykh had a domino effect as it led to a chain of events, which strained the relations between the Sultan and the Shaykh to such an extent that the former had eventually fixed the head money for the latter. So probably keeping in view the retaliation of the late Sultan, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn preferred to accept the cash *futūḥ* sent by Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn. Mindful of the incidents of the previous reign, which might have prompted the Shaykh to avoid landing into trouble with the political authorities, an important underlying consideration seems to be the Shaykh’s preference for avoiding any conflict or open hostility with the state and the Sultan. Therefore, it can be inferred that unlike the Chishtī traditions regarding land grants or *jāgīrs*, there were no such rules which governed the rejection or acceptance of cash *futūḥ*. The attitude towards the cash

²³⁹ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 87. Commenting on the Shaykh’s acceptance of the Sultan’s offering, R. P. Tripathi observes: “There is also reason to think that he (the Sultan) had the moral support of Shaikh Nizamuddin who exercised considerable influence over the people.” Idem, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Allahabad, 1936), p. 54 as cited in Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u’-d-din Auliya*, p. 119, n.1. Nizami adds here: “But this conjecture is not warranted in view of the Shaikh’s well-known aversion to rulers and politics.”

futūh seems to be somewhat flexible, and hence, discretionary. Sometimes the cash *futūh* was immediately distributed in charity, and sometimes it was kept for the *langar*.

The brief reign of Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Khusrau, which lasted for a little more than four months, was marked by the ascendancy of the Hindus, particularly of his clan-members from Gujrat. Moreover, the Sultan is said to have initiated an absolute 'reign of terror' by executing the supporters of the previous regime and the family members of the late Sultan.²⁴⁰ This state of affairs was completely unacceptable to the *umarā'*. The 'Alā'ī *umarā'* mustered the support of other groups and factions at the court, and rebelled against the regime. The forces of the reigning Sultan were finally routed, and he was beheaded. The leader of the Revolution was Ghāzī Malik Tughluq, who replaced the Sultan and ascended the throne with the title of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq.

4.6.5 Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq

Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq (r. 1320-25), the founder of the Tughluq Dynasty, is said to have had a deep religious orientation. According to contemporary and near contemporary historians, he was a staunch and practicing Muslim, and was endowed with laudable virtues and qualities.²⁴¹ He held the Sufis in high esteem. Since Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī had appointed him governor of Dīpālpur, where he lived for some time, he developed devotion for Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn of Ajōdhan, the grandson of Bābā Farīd, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn, the Suhrawardī Sufi of Multan, and Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar

²⁴⁰ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 87.

²⁴¹ For a detailed analysis, see Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 310-13, and Iṣlāhī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī aur Sharī'at-i Islāmiyyah*, p. 38.

of Panipat.²⁴² However, his relations with Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn —the Chishtī leader in Delhi, is a matter of controversy among the historians.

When Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq ascended the throne, he found the treasury empty, as the previous Sultan had squandered all the wealth in winning over the people. Therefore, he ordered an inquiry into it, and also ordered its recovery from its recipients. The lack of resources at the disposal of the state can be assessed from the fact that in order to refill his treasury, the new Sultan also deprived the *imāms* and Sufis of their old allowances.²⁴³ According to Jamālī, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was also asked to return the money, which Khusrau Khān had sent him in *futūḥ*. He replied that it was the money of the *bayt al-māl* (the public treasury) and had been distributed among the deserving people. Moreover, he said, he had not consumed a single *tankah* on himself. When the Sultan heard the Shaykh's reply, he kept silent, as he could not claim the money on legal grounds. Jamālī adds that the incident embittered the relations between the two, and the malice for the Shaykh could never be removed from the Sultan's heart.²⁴⁴ It is difficult to assume that the Sultan was ignorant of the prevalent practices of the *jamā' atkhānah* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, particularly regarding the disbursement of *futūḥ* in charity. Nizami maintains that the failure of the Shaykh to reimburse the money could not be the reason for the Sultan's displeasure, "though the possibility of the very acceptance of gift annoying the Sultan cannot be ruled out."²⁴⁵

²⁴² Niẓāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 313-14. For a biographical sketch of Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar, see 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Šūfiyah*, pp. 234-57.

²⁴³ See details in 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 381-83.

²⁴⁴ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 87.

²⁴⁵ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya*, p. 120.

Jamālī further informs that in the previous reign, many Sufis had refused to accept the *futūḥ* sent by Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Khusrau. These included Saiyyid ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, Shaykh Wahīd al-Dīn, the *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd, and Shaykh ‘Uthmān Saīyāh of Sunnam (d. 1338), the *khalīfah* of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn of Multan. Though some Sufis accepted the *futūḥ*, they kept it and did not distribute or consume it.²⁴⁶ It seems that they had returned the *futūḥ* to the new Sultan when demanded. Therefore, Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn pressed for the recovery of grant from Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, as some other Sufis had set the precedent by returning it. The precedents must have strengthened the case of the Sultan against the Shaykh.

It is significant that Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq was unanimously placed on the throne of Delhi unlike the earlier rulers. Initially, he was reluctant to ascend the throne, but later on the insistence of the *umarā’*, he had assumed the office of the Sultan. Therefore, unlike the preceding regimes, there was no question of lack of legitimacy. His position as Sultan was firm and stable. He had no fear of opposition, and that was why he ordered an inquiry into the finances of the Sultanate, and pressed Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’ to reimburse the whole amount granted to him by Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Khusrau. Such a practice of recovery of official cash grants was without precedent in the history of the Sultanate, as generally only the land grants, granted during the previous regimes, were confiscated by the incumbent Sultans.

²⁴⁶ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Arifīn*, p. 87.

An important incident during the reign of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn was the controversy over *samā'*, and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was asked to appear before the Sultan and an assembly or a tribunal of '*ulamā'*'. The '*ulamā'*' were led by Shaykhzādah Ḥussām al-Dīn Jām (or Farjām), who was an opponent of the Shaykh. As mentioned earlier, the Shaykhzādah had been invited by Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī to Delhi and installed there in order to counter the popularity of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn.²⁴⁷ However, his *jamā' atkhānah* in Delhi, which was constructed by the Sultan, failed to attract popular attention. In this way, the plan of the Sultan and Shaykhzādah was frustrated. Another leading scholar or '*ālim*' of the reign of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn was Qāḍī Jalāl al-Dīn Walwai'jī,²⁴⁸ who played a crucial role in summoning the Shaykh before the Sultan and the assembly of '*ulamā'*'. He was known for his opposition and hostility to the Sufis. In addition, Qāḍī Kamāl al-Dīn (the *Ṣadr-i Jahān*) was also among those who had pressed the Sultan to issue an order to prevent the Shaykh from the practice of *samā'*.

These '*ulamā'*' asked Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn to make Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn appear in court for a public debate on the issue of *samā'*, and thus, decide its legality or otherwise. When the summons reached the Shaykh, he remained composed and undisturbed, but there existed considerable commotion among his disciples and devotees.

²⁴⁷ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 396, and Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 590.

²⁴⁸ The name of *nā'ib qāḍī* (Deputy Chief Justice) has been mentioned in Calcutta edition as Qāḍī Jalāl al-Dīn Walwālji, where the Aligarh edition mentions the name as Qāḍī Jalāl al-Dīn Walwā'ji, who was appointed at the post during the reign of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, Calcutta ed., p. 351, and Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, Aligarh ed., vol. II, p. 182. But Amīr Khūrd writes his name as Qāḍī Jalāl al-Dīn Lawānjī, and his designation as that of *nā'ib ḥākīm-i mamlīkat*, whereas Jamālī has written his name as Qāḍī Rukn al-Dīn Dalwālji. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 527, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-Ārifīn*, p. 88. Nizami has, however, written his names as Qāḍī Jalāl al-Dīn Sōranjī, and his designation as that of *nā'ib ḥākīm-i mamlīkat*. Idem, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya*, p. 119.

The Shaykh's disciples like Mawlānā Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī (d. 1347)²⁴⁹ and Mawlānā Wajih al-Dīn Pā'ili,²⁵⁰ who were well-versed in law and theology, tried to present some arguments in favour of *samā'* before the Shaykh, but he did not pay any heed to them. On the given date, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn went to the court to attend the public debate. His two disciple-scholars, Qāḍī Muḥyi al-Dīn Kāshānī and Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī, were also present there, though the Shaykh had preferred going there unaccompanied by anyone. The public debate was presided over by the Sultan himself. The critics of *samā'* and the opponents of the Shaykh argued that *samā'* was unlawful, and hence, forbidden in Hanafite Law, which prevailed in the Sultanate of Delhi. Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn cited some *aḥādīth* in favour of his pro-*samā'* stance. During the debate, the opponents of the Shaykh created disturbance, but it was hushed up by the Sultan. Some of the '*ulamā'*' present in the court, such as Mawlānā Ḥamīd al-Dīn, seemed to be sympathetic to the Shaykh. The attitude of the Sultan towards the Shaykh also seemed favourable. When the Sultan saw that the heated controversy on *samā'* was leading nowhere, he asked Shaykh 'Ilm al-Dīn—the grandson of Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā of Multan, to give the verdict. Shaykh 'Ilm al-Dīn had just returned to India after visiting many Muslim countries. He told the participants of the debate that *samā'* was permissible for those who listened to it with their heart, and not for those who listened to it with their *nafs* (carnal soul). He also said that in Makkah, Madinah, Egypt and Syria, where he had traveled, the '*ulamā'*' and the Sufis listened to music, and some had even permitted the use of musical instruments such as *daff* (drum). He also told the participants that in those countries,

²⁴⁹ For a brief biographical note, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 262-75, 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, pp. 97-98, and 'Alī, *Tadhkira-'i 'Ulamā-'i Hind*, pp. 374-75.

²⁵⁰ For a brief biographical note, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 296-98, 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 105, and 'Alī, *Tadhkira-'i 'Ulamā-'i Hind*, p. 541.

nobody objected to the practice of *samā'*, which was a legacy of the times of Shaykh Junayd and Shaykh Shibli. When the Sultan heard the opinion of Shaykh 'Ilm al-Dīn, he became silent. However, Qādī Jalāl al-Dīn pressed the Sultan to issue an order to prohibit the practice of *samā'*, but Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn requested the Sultan not to issue any verdict in this regard. Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn accepted the request of the Shaykh, and refrained from passing any order. After the debate was over, the Sultan apologized, and bade the Shaykh farewell with respect and honour, whereas Qādī Jalāl al-Dīn was dismissed from his position by the Sultan after a few days.²⁵¹ It is surprising that a modern historian, while referring to the public debate on *samā'*, calls it a victory of the Sultan and the '*ulamā'*'.²⁵²

Amīr Khūrd cites from Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī's *Ḥasratnāmāh*, which is not extant now, that Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn told Mawlānā Muḥiyy al-Dīn Kāshānī and Amīr Khusrau about the antagonistic behaviour of the '*ulamā'*' of Delhi.²⁵³ Though some '*ulamā'*' sincerely contested the Sufī doctrine and the practice of *samā'*, many of them were also envious of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn's popularity and influence among the people, so these '*ulamā'*' seem to have used the Chishtī practice of *samā'* along with ecstatic dance or *raqs* as an excuse to undermine the popularity and influence of the Shaykh, and thereby

²⁵¹ For a detailed account of the incident, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 527-31. Jamālī records the incident of the public debate on the authority of Amīr Khūrd, but he adds that the public debate was attended by 253 '*ulamā'*'. See details in idem, *Siyar al-Ārifīn*, pp. 87-89.

²⁵² Aziz Ahmad, "The Sufī and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India", p. 150. Here it seems pertinent to quote Nizami: "This was the first and the last occasion that the great Shaikh attended the Delhi court. It should be remembered that he was summoned to the court to explain a matter involving interpretation of *Shari'at* law. What he attended was not a Sultan's court, but the court of *Shari'at*." Idem, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya*, p. 119, n.2.

²⁵³ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 531. Amīr Khūrd has written the title of the book as *Hairatnāmāh* [sic] (The Book of Wonders), whereas the actual name of the book was *Ḥasratnāmāh* (The Book of Regrets). Irfan Habib, "Ḍiyā Baranī's Vision of the State", p. 23. Amīr Khūrd has elsewhere written the correct name of the book as well. See, for instance, idem, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 313, 346, 531.

enhance their own. In the opinion of Aziz Ahmad, the previous reign of Khusrau Shāh “had given to Islamic orthodoxy as bad a jolt as to Muslim political power, and they both formed a joint front against sufism...”²⁵⁴ Therefore, in order to reassert their power and authority, the ‘*ulamā*’ pressed the Sultan to take action against Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn.

Moreover, it can be gathered from the account of Amīr Khūrd that the Shaykh returned from the court with a heavy heart.²⁵⁵ However, the Shaykh did not utter a single word against Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn. In fact, during the public debate, the attitude of the Sultan was sympathetic towards Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, and he also sided with the Shaykh by accepting his request and thereby, not issuing any verdict. The Sultan also seemed to avoid taking any extreme measure against the Shaykh, which could incur the displeasure of the people at large. According to Habib, the Sultan exhibited impartiality and neutrality in the public debate,²⁵⁶ while in the words of Riazul Islam, the Sultan conducted the proceedings of the debate “judiciously and with good sense, and gave no grounds for complaint to the Shaikh.”²⁵⁷

However, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn felt unhappy at being summoned to the court, as it was a departure from his practice, as well as that of his preceptor, of not visiting the royal court. But there is no evidence to support the assertion that at that time the Sultan had any personal grudge against the Shaykh, or any ulterior motive in summoning the

²⁵⁴ Aziz Ahmad, “The Sufi and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India”, p. 149. Aziz Ahmad also calls the public debate over *samā*’, where the Shaykh had to appear in person, “the first trial of strength” between the Shaykh and the Sultan. p. 150.

²⁵⁵ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*’, pp. 531-32.

²⁵⁶ Ḥabīb, *Ḥadrat Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā*’, p. 129.

²⁵⁷ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 250.

Shaykh to the court. In the opinion of Nizami, there existed no personal enmity between the two, as Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn had not summoned the Shaykh to his court on grounds of any personal grudge; rather it seems that the Sultan wanted to ascertain the legality or otherwise of the *samā'*. No contemporary historian or hagiographer has produced evidence of any bitterness between them.²⁵⁸ It was only towards the close of his reign that the Sultan was pressed hard by the '*ulamā'*' holding official positions to summon the Shaykh and have a public debate at the court. However, once the malafide intentions of these '*ulamā'*' against the Shaykh became obvious to the Sultan, he dismissed their leader and spokesperson from his official position.

Some primary sources indicate the existence of friction between the Sultan and the Shaykh after the public debate on *samā'*. For instance, Sirhindī's *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī* informs that when Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn was on his military expedition in Lakhnautī (Bengal) in 1323-25, he ordered the construction of a pavilion in Afghānpur,²⁵⁹ near Delhi, in order to celebrate his victory. Before his return, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn is reported to have uttered: "*hanūz Dellī dūr ast.*" (Delhi is still quite far away). The Shaykh's utterance has now become proverbial in Urdu language. When the Sultan returned after the successful expedition and reached Afghānpur, he said: "Having placed my foot on the bosom of my enemy, I have returned." When the news reached the Shaykh, he again said that Delhi was still quite far away. In Afghānpur, Malik Aḥmad Ayāz, *mīr-i 'imārāt* (the chief architect of the Empire) had constructed the wooden pavilion to receive the victorious Sultan, where he was to grant an audience to his *umarā'*

²⁵⁸ Nizāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 315, 318, 321.

²⁵⁹ Afghānpur was situated at a distance of 3 *curōh* (6 miles) from Tughluqabād.

and courtiers as well. However, after the Sultan had entered and taken his seat in it, some elephants were presented to him, but the pavilion collapsed under the weight of the elephants. It caused the accidental death of the Sultan.²⁶⁰ Sirhindī's account seems incomplete, and lacks explanation as well.

Mahdi Husain interprets the Shaykh's utterance quite differently. He argues that the relationship between the Shaykh and the Sultan, which had been strained earlier, was later normalized. When the Sultan sent a message to the Shaykh from Lakhnautī and requested him to present himself in the royal court, the Shaykh had uttered that Delhi was still quite far away. In fact, the Shaykh passed away two months before the Sultan's arrival in Afghānpur. Since the Shaykh possessed an exceptional insight, his utterance implied that there would be no further meeting between them, as he, the Shaykh, would leave the world before the Sultan's arrival.²⁶¹ Thus, he rules out any possibility of friction between the Sultan and the Shaykh.

Nonetheless, on the basis of Sirhindī's account, some of the modern as well as medieval historians have inferred that the relationship between the Sultan and the Shaykh had been strained ever since the public debate was held on *samā'*. For instance, Riazul Islam infers "an implied threat"²⁶² to the Shaykh from the Sultan from the narrative of Sirhindī, though it does not allude to any explicit or implicit threat from the Sultan to the Shaykh. It seems that the Sirhindī's account has been uncritically accepted. According to

²⁶⁰ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 96-97.

²⁶¹ For a brief discussion, see Agha Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty* (Calcutta: Thacker Spink and Co., 1963), Appendix K, "Dehli hanoz dur ast", pp. 628-31.

²⁶² Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 251.

Badāyūnī, for instance, Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn bore ill-will to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, and therefore, while on his way to Lakhnautī, the Sultan had sent a message to the Shaykh: “After my arrival in Delhi, either the Shaykh will be there or I.” When the Shaykh was apprised of the arrival of the Sultan near Delhi, he exclaimed: “*hanūz Dellī dūr ast*”.²⁶³ However, Badāyūnī’s account fails to mention any cause of friction between the Sultan and the Shaykh. Moreover, it is important to note that Badāyūnī has narrated the incident after giving the details of the death of the Sultan, and has explicitly stated that the story “is currently reported among the people of India.” It vividly shows that Badāyūnī had not taken it from any credible source; rather he had himself admitted that it was based on hearsay. For this reason, historians like Habib²⁶⁴ and Salim²⁶⁵ have questioned the authenticity of Badāyūnī’s account. Similarly, *Niẓāmī Bansarī* also narrates a long story how the relationship of the Sultan and the Shaykh deteriorated.²⁶⁶ As indicated earlier,

²⁶³ Al-Badāonī, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, (Ranking), vol. 1, p. 301.

²⁶⁴ Habib, *Ḥaḍrat Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā*, p. 129.

²⁶⁵ Muhammad Salim, “Shaykh Nizam-ud-din Awliya’ and the Sultans of Dehli”, *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XV, part I (January 1967), p. 44.

²⁶⁶ According to *Niẓāmī Bansarī*, after his visit to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn’s *jamā’ atkhānah*, Jūnā Ulugh Khān appointed Aḥmad Ayāz, who was a close disciple of the Shaykh, as *mīr-i ‘imārāt*, and entrusted the task of supervising the construction of the fort and the city of Tughluqabad to him. In those days, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn had ordered the construction of a *bāōlī* (a well with stairs), and entrusted the task to his five disciples. However, despite the request of Hardēv, the Shaykh did not permit him to join them in the construction of the *bāōlī*. After some time, while on his expedition to Bengal, Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn sent a messenger to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, and asked him to leave Delhi before his return to it. The Sultan is also reported to have said that he did not want to see in Delhi the person who, being a human, had made the people idolize and venerate him, and who being a Hanafite, indulged in *samā’* and held *samā’* gatherings openly. Upon hearing the message from the Sultan, the Shaykh ordered the words “*hanūz Dellī dūr ast*” to be written at the top of the letter, and sent it back to the Sultan. At the same time another letter from the Sultan reached Prince Jūnā Ulugh Khān, wherein the Sultan wrote to him that he had come to know about his visit to the *jamā’ atkhānah* of the Shaykh as well as the Shaykh’s prediction about his kingship. The Sultan also threatened the Prince that he would cancel his succession to the throne as his heir. The Sultan also tried to obstruct the construction of the *bāōlī*, and ordered the Shaykh to leave the place. In fact, after some time, a third letter reached the Prince from his father apprising him that the Sultan had come to know that Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was constructing a *bāōlī*, and since the *mīr-i ‘imārāt* was a disciple of the Shaykh, all the masons and labourers worked there at night. The Sultan also ordered the Prince to prevent the labourers from taking part in the construction work. Therefore, the Prince inquired the matter from

the authorship of *Nizāmī Bansarī* is dubious; therefore, its account cannot be accepted uncritically. Moreover, the story narrated by it is not corroborated from any other source. Thus, it can be safely inferred that the relations between the Sultan and the Shaykh were normal even after the *samā'* debate.

It is important to note that Baranī does not refer to any friction between Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', and the utterance of the Shaykh like "*hanūz Dellī dūr ast.*" All that he mentions is the death of the Sultan in

Aḥmad Ayāz, who told him that the Shaykh had himself prohibited him from assisting the construction of the *bāḍlī*. Upon hearing this, the Prince sent a reply to the Sultan accordingly. But a third letter from Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq soon reached the Prince. It ordered the Prince that not only all the labourers taking part in the construction of the *bāḍlī* be prevented from it, all the shopkeepers be prevented from selling oil to the disciples of the Shaykh as well, so that they could not construct it at night. Moreover, the Sultan also asked the Prince to order the Shaykh to leave the place and go elsewhere. The Prince acted accordingly, and prohibited the labourers to take part in the construction of *bāḍlī* and the shopkeepers to sell oil to the disciples of the Shaykh. He also sent a message to the Shaykh to leave the place, as the arrival of the Sultan in Delhi was soon expected. When the labourers gave up their construction work, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn asked his disciples including the senior *khulafā'* to continue the construction work. Aḥmad Ayāz and the labourers taking part in the construction of the fort and the city voluntarily gave up their official appointments, and joined in the construction of the *bāḍlī*. Since they could not buy oil, the Shaykh ordered Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn to use the water of the *bāḍlī* as oil in lamps. Since Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn carried out the orders of the Shaykh, and the water was miraculously lighted like oil, people started using *Chirāgh-i Dehlī* (The Lamp of Delhi) as Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn's epithet from that day. After seven days, when the construction of the *bāḍlī* was completed, Hardēv went to see the Prince. When the latter inquired about his absence, he told him that being a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, he was bound to obey his orders, which were meant for all disciples. Now he was ready to accept any punishment from the Prince. When Prince Jūnā Ulugh Khān heard this, he laughed and said: "I have obeyed the orders of my father. I do not wish to interfere in the matter any further, since I consider the Shaykh right and my father wrong. I also know that the Sultan is offended from you because the Shaykh has prayed for me. You can carry on your work. After his return, if the Sultan inquires anything about your absence, I will handle the situation."

According to Hardēv, a few days later, the news arrived that the Sultan had left Bengal for Delhi. Hardēv constructed a wooden palace in Afghānpur on the orders of the Crown Prince. When the Sultan reached Afghānpur, he was received in the newly constructed palace. After the meal, the Prince introduced Hardēv to Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq. Though the Sultan appreciated the architecture and décor of the palace, he called an explanation of the Prince as to why he had not complied with his orders to expel Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn from Delhi and dismiss his disciple Hardēv from his job. The Prince did not answer, and remained silent. Meanwhile, when some of the people came out of the palace to say the 'aṣr (late afternoon) Prayers, the Prince started presenting the offering of elephants to his father. As soon as some elephants entered the newly erected building, it collapsed, and the Sultan along with his younger son Maḥmūd and some *umarā'* died under the rubble. For details, see Hardēv, *Nizāmī Bansarī*, pp. 208-18.

Afghānpur when a building collapsed, and he died under its rubble along with some courtiers.²⁶⁷ As for Amīr Khūrd, he is silent regarding this issue. Though Ibn-i Batuta was not an eye-witness to these events, he was a near contemporary historian. His account provides some reasons for the friction between the father and the son: the Sutan was already resentful of the Prince owing to the latter's exceptionally good treatment of the newly convert Muslims, excessive generosity and extravagance in purchasing slaves. When the Sultan learnt that the Shaykh had prayed for the succession of the Prince, and the Prince had carried the bier of the Shaykh after his demise, he got more angry with him.²⁶⁸ However, it is important to keep in mind that much of the information provided by Ibn Baṭṭūṭah was based on hearsay.

According to *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, the Crown Prince, Jūnā Ulugh Khān (Prince Muḥammad), was a devotee of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā',²⁶⁹ and he used to visit the

²⁶⁷ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 452. Ibn Battutah mistakenly succumbs to the conspiracy theory that the Prince was involved in murdering his father. Idem, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, pp. 92-93. For a refutation, see translator's note, pp. 96-97. Farishtah also rejects the theory that it was a patricide. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. 2, p. 8. Nizami writes that some reckless and uncritical writers such as W. H. Sleeman (*Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, vol. II, p. 54) and Cooper (*The Handbook of Delhi*, p. 97) have expressed the view that Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn was involved in a conspiracy against the Sultan in connivance with Prince Ulugh Khān. Such aspersions on the character of the Shaykh are unwarranted and untenable. Moreover, Mzik, Bohrah and others have exposed the ludicrousness of the charges leveled against the Shaykh. Idem, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya*, p. 121, n.4. Nizami further writes that modern scholars such as Wolseley Haig (*Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, (July 1922)) and Ishwari Prasad (*A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, p. 46) hold Prince Ulugh Khān (Muḥammad ibn Tughluq) responsible for the tragedy, but Mahdi Husain (*Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, p. 66) and Moinul Haq ("Was Muḥammad B. Tughluq a patricide?", *Muslim University Journal*, Aligarh (1939)) have exonerated Muḥammad ibn Tughluq of any conspiracy against his father, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, and have proved that the latter's death was purely accidental. Idem, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya*, p. 122, n.1., and idem, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 319, n.2.

²⁶⁸ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, p. 92.

²⁶⁹ *Nizāmī Bansarī* informs that when Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' was on his death-bed, and Prince Jūnā Khān was apprised of it, he sent his doctor (*shāhī ṭabīb*) to the Shaykh. After inspecting the Shaykh, the doctor conveyed the wish of the Prince to see the Shaykh. Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn is reported to have uttered nothing, and closed his eyes. The silence of the Shaykh was interpreted by his

jamā' atkhānah of the Shaykh in Delhi as well. Once he visited the *jamā' atkhānah* of the Shaykh along with the *Khwājah-'i Jahān*.²⁷⁰ It further informs that when the two met the Shaykh, he asked the Crown Prince to sit on a *takht* (a throne-like low seat or a bed) whereas the *Khwājah-'i Jahān* was asked to be seated on a chair. While returning from the *jamā' atkhānah*, the Crown Prince told the *Khwājah-'i Jahān* that he had interpreted the Shaykh's utterances as implicitly predicting that he (the Prince) would become a king one day, whereas the *Khwājah-'i Jahān* would become his *wazīr*.²⁷¹ The visit of the Prince to the Shaykh's *jamā' atkhānah* and prediction of the Shaykh regarding the accession is not enough proof of the strained relations between the father and the son, and the Sultan and the Shaykh.

disciples and associates present near him as permission to the Sultan to visit him. The doctor returned to the palace with the message. However, next morning at day-break, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn passed away. Shortly after his demise, the Prince came to the *jamā' atkhānah*, and is reported to have wept bitterly upon seeing the face of the Shaykh. The Sultan also participated in the Shaykh's funeral. For details, see Hardēv, *Niẓāmī Bansarī*, pp. 226-32.

²⁷⁰ It appears that the Prince was, in fact, accompanied by his close associate, Aḥmad Ayāz, who later became his *wazīr* and assumed the title of *Khwājah-'i Jahān*.

²⁷¹ Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-'Aqā'id*, pp. 96-97. The same work informs that on another occasion when the Prince (Ulugh Khān) visited the Shaykh, his personal attendant named Iqbāl informed him that Ulugh Khān had come. The Shaykh said to him: "Say the Sultan has come." The Shaykh repeated it thrice. p. 96. It was an explicit prediction of the kingship of the Prince. Later, when the Prince ascended the throne, he entrusted the *wizārat* (Prime Ministership) to Aḥmad Ayāz.

Niẓāmī Bansarī refers to the conflict between the Sultan and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, and the visit of the Prince Muḥammad to the Shaykh's *jamā' atkhānah*. According to it, Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn's relations with his son and heir-apparent, Jūnā Ulugh Khān, who was a devotee of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, were strained, and that was why the Sultan wanted to declare his younger son, Maḥmūd, as his heir-apparent. Therefore, Jūnā Khān visited the *jamā' atkhānah* of the Shaykh disguised as a poor *darvēsh* in tattered clothes, so that his father might not know about his meeting with the Shaykh. The Crown Prince feared that his father might mistakenly assume that he had visited the *jamā' atkhānah* in order to seek the prayers of the Shaykh against his father. On the occasion of his visit, the Shaykh, however, predicted that one day he would be a king. Hardēv, *Niẓāmī Bansarī*, pp. 202-3. As pointed out earlier, the account of *Niẓāmī Bansarī* cannot be accepted uncritically.

Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' passed away in April 1325 during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.²⁷² Before his demise, the Shaykh had nominated Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd alias *Chirāgh-i Dehlī* as his principal successor. Thus, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn assumed the leadership of the Chishtī *Silsilah* after Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn. The relations of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq with Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn and other Chishtī Sufis have been discussed in detail in the next chapter.

During the lifetime of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, a number of Sultans ascended the throne of Delhi, and the official policy towards the Chishtī Sufis underwent considerable shifts, which impacted upon the relationship between the Sultans and the Chishtī Sufis. Some of the Sultans of Delhi were favourably inclined towards the Chishtī leadership, whereas others harboured grudge against the Shaykh. However, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn never visited their courts, despite being summoned by many Sultans to appear before them. Only on one occasion when he was ordered to participate in a public debate regarding the validity of *samā'* during the reign of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq did he feel obliged to go to the court. Like his preceptor, the Shaykh maintained a safe distance from court life and political matters. The Chishtī tradition of detachment from political affairs and court life is said to have reached its zenith during the times of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'. In the words of Rizvi, the "life of Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya' in Delhi was to become the epitome of Bābā Farīd's teachings, and it marked the crystallization of the ideology of the Chishti Order."²⁷³

²⁷² The Sultan is said to have died in July 1325. Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 629-30. Niẓāmī *Bansari*'s account mistakenly assumes the demise of the Shaykh after the accidental death of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq. Hardēv, *Niẓāmī Bansari*, p. 219.

²⁷³ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 157.

The Shaykh also refused to accept any land grant from the state, and his *khulafā'* were also not allowed to receive it. However, the Shaykh's attitude towards the acceptance or rejection of cash grants or *futūḥ* from the Sultans of Delhi seems difficult to generalize. In Chishtī teachings and practices, it seems to be left to individual discretion. On some occasions, he accepted cash *futūḥ* from the state, but he immediately distributed it amongst the poor and the needy without keeping a single *tankah* for himself. He preferred *faqr* to *ghinā*, unlike the ruling elite of the Sultanate. In the words of a scholar:

... in the personality of Nizamuddin was realized the power which brought to the fore the perennial assertion of spirituality that world-renunciation or the cultivation of spirit was not a passive state.... The *faqr*-power equation emerged as a direct opposition to the property-power equation. The power in the former was of course radically different from the latter. It involved neither coercion nor compulsion. Rather, it radiated an energy that impressed and flowed into the one it encountered.²⁷⁴

The Shaykh cautiously maintained a distance from the court, and tried to preserve the autonomous space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Delhi Sultanate. In the words of Riazul Islam:

Sh. Nizam ud-din Awliya strove all his life, even under the most trying conditions, to preserve the independence of the Chishtia *silsila* as well as of his *jama'at-khana* from government interference and influence. Accordingly, he kept away as a rule from all state matters, large or small. But he combined this with an open-door policy towards princes, ministers, and government servants. Only a mystic of the Shaikh's sublime character could combine these two different stances in the optimum proportion.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Shuja Alhaq, *A Forgotten Vision: A Study of Human Spirituality in the Light of the Islamic Tradition* (London: Minerva Press, 1996), p. 253.

²⁷⁵ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 251.

Borrowing insights from post-modernist perspective, Sunil Kumar has studied the contending sets of discursive statements of Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ concerning the moral right to authority. He argues that the Shaykh’s teachings ‘envisaged an exclusive moral right to guide and govern the thoughts and conduct of his disciples...’²⁷⁶ He further argues that although the Shaykh’s discourses, as recorded in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, expanded an alternative universe of Islam, weakening the structures supporting the Sultan’s claims to moral authority, the former “did not construct a ‘competing’ ideology; his was the authoritative version of Islam.”²⁷⁷

Regarding the influence of the Shaykh on the lives of the people, Baranī records that the presence of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn had stirred up a revolution in the lives of the people of north India by his lofty ethical ideals and devotion to God.²⁷⁸ Baranī calls him Shaykh Junayd and Bāyazīd of the age.²⁷⁹ That is why, Schimmel observes that during the lifetime of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn “Sufism became a mass movement in northwestern India, and the moral principles laid down by the early Chishtī saints did much to shape the ideals of the Muslim society in that part of the Subcontinent.”²⁸⁰

4.7 Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn and the ‘Ulamā’

Like his preceptor, Bābā Farīd, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn had to confront the criticism and hostility of his contemporary ‘ulamā’. Nevertheless, in his case, the criticism and enmity

²⁷⁶ Sunil Kumar, “Assertions of Authority: A Study of the Discursive Statements of Two Sultans of Delhi” in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture*, eds. Alam, Delvoye and Gaborieau, p. 54.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁷⁸ For details of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn’s influence on the lives of people, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 343–46.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

²⁸⁰ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 350.

of 'ulamā' was more stringent and more intense. Bābā Farīd had spent his life in the towns of Hānsī and Ajōdhan in the Punjab, far from the urban centres, provincial headquarters, and Delhi, the capital of the Sultanate. Contrary to this, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn lived in the suburbs of Delhi, and his sublime character and teachings attracted the people in large numbers, including Muslims and Hindus alike, who flocked to his *jamā' atkhānah* in Ghiyāthpur. His popularity and influence among the people reached its zenith during the reign of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī. Being the leader of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, he was a centre of gravity for the disciples and devotees. The fame, reverence and love of the people for the Shaykh incurred the envy and jealousy of his contemporary 'ulamā', particularly those who held official positions.

In historiographical and hagiographical literature, one comes across names of the following persons who were the adversaries of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn: Mīr Chajjū of Andrapat,²⁸¹ Shams al-Dīn *Bazzāz* (the cloth-dealer),²⁸² sons of Shaykh 'Imād Ṭūsī, the *khalīfah* of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn Firdawsī,²⁸³ Qāḍī Muḥammad Ghaznavī, a close associate of Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī,²⁸⁴ Qāḍī Ḍiyā' al-Dīn of Sunnam, the *muḥtasib* of Delhi,²⁸⁵ and his sons,²⁸⁶ Qāḍī Jalāl al-Dīn Walwai'jī, an eminent scholar and the *nā'ib qāḍī* during the reign of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Qāḍī Kamāl al-Dīn, the *Ṣadr-i*

²⁸¹ After his death, the Shaykh went to his funeral, and prayed for his forgiveness. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 164, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 79-80.

²⁸² According to *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* and *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, Shams al-Dīn *Bazzāz* had later entered the fold of the Shaykh's discipleship. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 24, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 80.

²⁸³ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 202, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 82.

²⁸⁴ According to Jamālī, Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī had once inquired about the resources of the *jamā' atkhānah* and *langar* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn from Qāḍī Muḥammad Ghaznavī, who was not favourably inclined towards the Shaykh. Idem, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, p. 74.

²⁸⁵ For a brief biographical sketch, 'Alī, *Tadhkira-'i 'Ulamā-'i Hind*, see pp. 255-56.

²⁸⁶ Hardēv, *Niẓāmī Bansari*, pp. 187-90.

Jahān and Shams Gāzrūnī.²⁸⁷ Nevertheless, some of the ‘*ulamā*’, who were once vehement critics of Sufism and the Sufis, or were not favourably inclined towards Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, later entered the fold of his discipleship. These included, among others, Mawlānā Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī²⁸⁸, Mawlānā Burhān al-Dīn Ḥujjat Multānī,²⁸⁹ Mawlānā Ḥussām al-Dīn Multānī,²⁹⁰ Shaykh Shams Autālah,²⁹¹ and a *qāḍī* of Gopālgīr.²⁹²

Many of the ‘*ulamā*’, who were opposed to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, were critical of the Chishtī practices of *samā’* and *raqṣ*. Like his preceptors, and most of the Chishtī Sufis, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was very fond of *samā’*.²⁹³ Mawlānā Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī, a disciple of the Shaykh, had also written a treatise on *samā’* titled *Uṣūl al-Samā’* in order to prove its validity according to *Sharī’ah*.²⁹⁴ The *samā’* gatherings at the *jamā’ atkhānah* of the Shaykh were an eye sore to these ‘*ulamā*’. These gatherings were attended by a large number of his disciples and devotees, including some of the *umarā’* and high state officials as well.²⁹⁵ Once the *samā’* party of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was attacked by some soldiers accompanied by Qāḍī Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn of Sunnam, the *muḥtasib* of Delhi, and his

²⁸⁷ For details, see Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-‘Aqā’id*, pp. 71-72.

²⁸⁸ For details of Mawlānā Zarrādī’s views about Sufis prior to his ‘conversion’, and the incident of his *bay’at* to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 263-64, Qalandar, *Khair-u’l-Majalis*, pp. 63-4, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, pp. 69-70.

²⁸⁹ For details, see Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-‘Aqā’id*, pp. 38-39.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.

²⁹¹ Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 109.

²⁹² For details, see Jamāl Qiwām, *Qiwām al-‘Aqā’id*, pp. 39-40.

²⁹³ Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn had even once expressed his desire to die in a state of ecstasy invoked by *samā’* like Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 123-24, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 85.

²⁹⁴ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 56, 296-70. For a brief discussion on the treatise, see Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, pp. 37-38.

²⁹⁵ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 73. Jamālī also informs that on one occasion, thousands of people attended the *samā’* party organized by one of the disciples of the Shaykh for him. p. 81.

two sons. However, they could not disrupt the *samā'* party.²⁹⁶ Such an incident shows that the anti-Sufi '*ulamā'*' had even resorted to force to stop the Sufi practices of *samā'* and *raqs*.

The '*ulamā'*' were not only content with it, so they pressed Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq to summon Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn in the court, and publicly defend his view-point on the issue, as discussed earlier. Apparently, the objective of holding the public debate on the issue was to ascertain the legality or otherwise of *samā'* and *raqs*. However, the real intention of the state-allied '*ulamā'*' seems to have been to undermine and erode the influence and religious authority of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn in particular, and the Sufis in general.

During the Sultanate era, the reign of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī stands out conspicuously for having amassed a constellation of '*ulamā'*' in Delhi.²⁹⁷ However, during the twenty-years of his rule, the official policy towards the '*ulamā'*' underwent a shift. According to historians, the Sultan tried to divorce religion from politics,²⁹⁸ and therefore, religious considerations were not taken into account while making political decisions. Moreover, he tried to curtail the influence of the '*ulamā'*' in politics and state affairs.²⁹⁹ Having been denied any substantial role in political affairs during the reign of

²⁹⁶ The attackers cut the ropes tied to the tent in which the party was organized. Next day, the two sons of the Qāḍī fell ill and immediately died, whereas the Qāḍī also fell seriously ill. The Shaykh went to see the ailing Qāḍī, who now regretted having molested the Shaykh and his disciples and devotees. See details in Hardēv, *Nizāmī Bansarī*, pp. 187-90.

²⁹⁷ 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Hindustān kē Salāṭīn*, '*Ulamā' aur Mashā'ikh kē Ta'lluqāt par ěk Naẓar*, p. 9. For a list of the '*ulamā'*' of the reign, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 353-54.

²⁹⁸ Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, p. 275.

²⁹⁹ For a detailed discussion, see Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 229-32.

'Alā' al-Dīn, the 'ulamā' wanted to reassert and strengthen their position after his reign. Moreover, the weak successors of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn also tried to win the support of the custodians of traditional religious authority, as represented by the 'ulamā', in order to create some legitimacy for their regimes. So the relationship of the 'ulamā' and the political authorities, particularly under the politically weak rulers, was symbiotic and interdependent, which had great bearing upon the relationship of the Sufis with the state, and the 'ulamā', who supported the state. During the reign of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, the 'ulamā' holding official positions again tried to assert their authority over the Sufis, as indicated by the public debate over *samā'*. Though the 'ulamā' remained successful in summoning the Shaykh to the court for a public trial, they could not get a verdict against the practice of *samā'*.

Hagiographical literature reveals that there were many critics of 'ulamā' in Delhi. One such person was Mawlānā Nūr Turk, a scholar-Sufi, who was a contemporary of Sultana Raḍīyyah. *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* informs that Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn had a sympathetic opinion regarding Mawlānā Nūr Turk. The Shaykh considered him 'purer than the rain water'.³⁰⁰ Quite contrarily, Nūr Turk's contemporary historian, Minhāj al-Sirāj Juzjānī, condemns him as a leader of *malāḥidah* (atheists), since the latter was vehemently critical of Sunni 'ulamā' in the Sultanate.³⁰¹ Being an official spokesperson, and a guardian of the interests of the 'ulamā', Juzjānī was prejudiced against Mawlānā Nūr Turk. In fact, Nūr Turk used to boldly criticize his contemporary 'ulamā' for their

³⁰⁰ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 334. For details about Nūr Turk, see pp. 334-36. See also Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 62, and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 81.

³⁰¹ Juzjānī accuses that in 1237, during Sultan Raḍīyyah's reign, one thousand adherents of Nūr Turk had attacked *Jāmi'* (central) Mosque of Delhi, and killed a number of people. Idem, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, pp. 98-99.

greed and avarice, and pursuit of power and official positions. The ‘*ulamā*’ also initiated a propaganda campaign against him.³⁰²

Nevertheless, the hostility of the ‘*ulamā*’, particularly those who held official positions, cannot be generalized, as some of them were favourably inclined towards the Sufis, including the Chishtīs. Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was himself a scholar, and held the ‘*ulamā*’ in great esteem.³⁰³ He used to attend the meetings of Qāḍī Juzjānī every Monday.³⁰⁴ Some of the leading contemporary ‘*ulamā*’ of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn such as Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī, Shaykh Wajīh al-Dīn Pā’ilī, Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā (d. 1345),³⁰⁵ Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Nīlī,³⁰⁶ and Qāḍī Muḥyi al-Dīn Kāshānī³⁰⁷ had entered the fold of his discipleship.

To conclude, Bābā Farīd spent his entire life in Hānsī and Ajōdhan. Owing to his preference for obscurity, and aloofness from state, there were very few chances of his interaction with the political authorities. Acting on the principles of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, he kept a distance from the political authorities, and thus, preserved its independence from the state. Nevertheless, his popularity and influence among the people had somewhat undermined the religious authority of the ‘*ulamā*’ in the neighbouring towns,

³⁰² For a brief discussion and analysis, see Nizami, *Some Aspects of the Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 293-94.

³⁰³ For details of the Shaykh’s views regarding ‘*ilm* (knowledge) and ‘*ulamā*’, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, pp. 534-40.

³⁰⁴ Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn himself informs that on one occasion, he was so overwhelmed by the sermon of Juzjānī that he lost all consciousness of his surroundings. Sijzī, *Fawā’id al-Fu’ād*, pp. 322, 429.

³⁰⁵ For a brief biographical note, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, pp. 223-35, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, pp. 103-04, and ‘Alī, *Tadhkira-i ‘Ulamā-i Hind*, pp. 236-37.

³⁰⁶ For a brief biographical note, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, pp. 275-78, ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, p. 99, Sarwar, *Khazīnat al-Asfiyā*, vol. I, p. 361, and ‘Alī, *Tadhkira-i ‘Ulamā-i Hind*, p. 339.

³⁰⁷ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 294, and ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, p. 104.

which also provoked their jealousy and criticism. Bābā Farīd's leading *khulafā'* including Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Mutawakkil, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq, Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn of Hānsī, and Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir of Kalyar also continued the Chishtī traditions of detachment from the court and politics, and thus, preserved the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah*. Nonetheless, Bābā Farīd's contemporary Chishtī Shaykh in Delhi, Badr al-Dīn Ghaznavī, failed to uphold these traditions, and got himself associated with the *umarā'* and the high state officials. In this way, he compromised the principle of the independence of the Chishtī *Silsilah* from the Sultanate of Delhi.

Contrary to Bābā Farīd, his principal successor and *khalīfah*, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, lived in the suburbs of Delhi, but he also maintained a distance from the court. Nevertheless, under him, the Chishtī principle and tradition of detachment from political authorities was severely tested, as a result of which it became more pronounced and explicitly manifest. The character of the Sultanate in the latter half of the thirteenth century and the first quarter of the fourteenth century witnessed considerable shifts during various regimes, and the official policy towards the Sufis underwent changes. Under some Sultans of Delhi, the state became over-bearing and assertive as far as the Chishtī Sufis were concerned. For instance, under state patronage, a rival *khānqāh* was set up in Delhi, in order to counter the popularity and influence of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn among the people, but the political authorities failed to achieve their desired result. It shows that the allegiance of the people to the Shaykh was unflinching, and the political authorities had failed to win popular support for a state-supported Sufi establishment.

It can also be concluded that Bābā Farīd and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn tried to preserve and expand the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* by adhering to the Chishtī principles, and their further dissemination as well as more pronounced practice of these principles in the Sultanate of Delhi. Though Bābā Farīd did not usually admit the *umarā'* in his discipleship, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's disciples included princes, crown-princes, *wazīrs*, *umarā'*, and important state officials such as *muqta's*, *qāḍīs* and *khaṭībs*. However, the Shaykh also tried to avoid any overt friction or conflict with the political authorities on various occasions. Moreover, the religious authority of the '*ulamā'*' was contested by the Sufīs in general, and more notably by the Chishtīs. The dogmatic and authoritative interpretation of Islamic beliefs and practices was contested by them, as revealed by the Chishtī doctrine and practice of *samā'* and its accompanying *raqṣ*. Owing to the tremendous influence of the Chishtī Shaykhs, it was difficult for the state to allow any particular version or interpretation of Islam to prevail, though the '*ulamā'*' pressed hard for their demand to ban the practices of *samā'* and *raqṣ*. In this sense, the Chishtī Shaykhs had also widened the 'doctrinal' space for Islam, as well as that of its practice, in the Muslim society in India.

(B) Lists of Real Names and Titles of the Chishtī Shaykhs

Real Names	Titles
Ḥasan	Badr al-‘Ārifīn, Mu‘īn al-Millat wa al-Dīn
Bakhtiyār	Qutb al-Millat wa al-Dīn, Shaykh al-Islām
Mas‘ūd	Farīd al-Millat wa al-Dīn, Shaykh al-Islām
Saīyyid Muḥammad	Nizām al-Millat wa al-Dīn Shaykh al-Islām Shāh-i Dīn (King of Religion) Sultān al-Awliyā’ (King of Sufīs) Sultān al-Mashā’ikh (King of Shaykhs) Sultān al-‘Ārifīn (King of Gnostics) Shāh-i ‘Ālam (King of the World) Shāh-i Aurang (King of Throne) Shahanshāh-i Aurang (Emperor of Throne) Sultān Jī
Maḥmūd	Naṣīr al-Millat wa al-Dīn Chirāgh-i Dehlī (Lamp of Delhi) Abū Hanīfah Thānī (Second Abū Hanīfah)
Ḥamīd Sūfī	Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sultān al-Tārikīn (King of Ascetics)

Titles of the Pre-Indian Sufīs of Chishti Initiatic Genealogy

Real Names	Titles
Ibrāhīm ibn Adham	Sultān al-Sālikīn (King of devotees) Tārik al-Mamlakat-o Sultānat (One who has abandoned the state and authority)
‘Alū Dīnawarī	Shams al-Fuqarā’ (Sun of the poor/ <i>darvēshes</i>)
Abū Aḥmad Chishtī	Sultān al-Aṣfiyā’ (King of the Sufīs)
Abū Yūsuf Chishtī	Nāṣir al-Millat wa al-Dīn (Helper of the faith and dīn)
Mawdūd Chishtī	Zill Allāh fī al-khalq (Shadow of God on people)
Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd ³	Shāh Sanjān (King of Sanjān, i.e. the place where he lived)
‘Uthmān Hārwanī	Ḥujjat al-Haqq ‘alā Khalq (Proof of God for the People)

³ Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd was one of the disciples of Khwājah Mawdūd Chishtī, who had granted the epithet to the former.

CHAPTER 5

State's Attempts at Encroachment on the Space of the *Silsilah*, and its Defense (1325-1351)

Though there had been stresses and strains in the relationship between the Sultans of Delhi and the Chishtī Shaykhs in the previous regimes, the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq ushered in a new chapter in the state-Sufi relationship. Under him, there was a radical change in the character of the state, as the entire political philosophy as well as the religious policy of the Sultanate underwent a shift, affecting every sphere of the polity--government and politics, society, religion and economy. As part of his general policy of forging a symbiotic relationship between religion and politics, the Sultan tried to bring the '*ulamā*' and the Sufis within the ambit of the state, by offering them varied official positions. The strategies to implement his plans and schemes ranged from persuasion and bargaining, to coercion, and the use of force as the last resort. These policies had far-reaching consequences for the Sufis, particularly those of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, which had carved out and preserved its space, free from state interference in the Sultanate of Delhi.

Under Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, the state tried to encroach on the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* by forcing the Chishtī Shaykhs to compromise the extent of the

practice of the Chishtī principles. In the changed circumstances, there were varied sets of responses from the Chishtīs to the challenges posed by the political authorities: some of the Chishtī Shaykhs, including the Chishtī leadership under Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, resisted the state's attempts at encroachment, and defended the space of their *Silsilah* by doggedly upholding the Chishtī traditions of detachment from state and politics. Some of the Chishtī Shaykhs tried to evade the official directives, while avoiding any conflict with the political authorities, whereas some of them accepted the government service under duress.

The present chapter is an attempt to address the following questions: what factors informed the shift in the state policy towards the Sufis under Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, how the state tried to encroach on the space of the Chishtīs, how the Chishtīs responded to this challenge, how the new policies affected the state-Sufi relationship in general, and how the shift in the state policy towards the Chishtīs influenced the Chishtī *Silsilah* in particular? This chapter is divided into two sections: the first section explores the religious and political ideals and policies of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, including his attitude towards the 'ulamā' and the Sufis in general; while the second investigates the relationship of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq with the Chishtī leader, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, who was the principal successor of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, and other eminent *khulafā'* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'. While doing so, it also assesses the impact of the state policies on the state-Sufi relationship, with a particular focus on the relationship with the Chishtī *Silsilah*.

Section I Religious and Political Ideals and Policies of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq: A Critical Appraisal

After the accidental death of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq in 1325, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq ascended the throne of Delhi. He is considered to be one of the greatest and most intelligent monarchs to sit on the throne of Delhi, though he could not effectively and efficiently rule the Sultanate during the later half of his reign. Under him, the religious policy of the state underwent a radical shift, since his treatment of the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis was a departure from the earlier regimes.

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq’s twenty-six years’ reign can be divided into two phases: first stretching from 1325 to 1335, and the second one from 1335 to 1351. The first phase, comprising the first ten years of his reign, has been regarded as a period of peace and tranquility, when the Sultan successfully and effectively ruled his huge Empire consisting of twenty-three provinces.¹ The second phase of sixteen years was a period of incessant rebellions and widespread unrest, as the Sultan implemented his mega-projects, and his religious policies also underwent a shift. It was owing to the disastrous consequences of these projects and policies that the Sultan had to face twenty-two rebellions in the length and breadth of his Empire. As a result of centrifugal tendencies,

¹ Aḥmad Abū ‘l-‘Abbās al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A‘shā*, Eng. trans. Otto Spies, *An Arab Account of India in the 14th Century (Being a Translation of the Chapters on India from al-Qalqashandī’s Subḥ-ul-A‘sha* (Aligarh: Muslim University Press, n.d.), p. 41. For some details of the extent of the Empire, see Ishwari Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India* (Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1936), pp. 79-81, 293.

his huge Empire was considerably shrunk in territorial extent,² and thus began a protracted process of the decline and disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate, which eventually culminated in the inception of Mughal rule in India in the wake of Bābar's invasion.

It appears that during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, there were explicit attempts on the part of the state to encroach on the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah*. Therefore, it is essential to critically examine the intellectual leanings and personal disposition of the Sultan as well as his religious and political ideals, which translated into concrete policies during the second phase of his reign, and affected the Sufis in general, and the Chishtīs in particular.

5.1 Intellectual Leanings and the Personal Disposition of the Sultan

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq is said to be highly learned and an accomplished scholar. He is considered to be “a man of ideas” and “the most striking figure in mediaeval India.”³ He was well-versed in medicine, mathematics, astronomy, rhetoric, metaphysics, history and Muslim jurisprudence or *fiqh*.⁴ Moreover, he had a passion for Greek philosophy and logic, which was an anathema to most of the ‘*ulamā*’ and scholars of the day, as they had a conservative and conventional approach to religion. At one stage in

² Two important kingdoms that emerged in Deccan were the Hindu Kingdom of Vijaynagar, co-founded by Bukkā and Harihārā in 1336, and a Muslim state called Bahmanī Kingdom, founded by ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Bahman Shāh in 1347. For a brief history of the two kingdoms, see Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, pp. 187-93, 232-46, and Majumdar, et al., *An Advanced History of India*, pp. 356-63, 366-83. Another important kingdom was the Sultanate of Madura in Ma‘bar founded by Jalāl al-Dīn Aḥsan Shāh in 1335. For a brief history, see Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, Appendix C, “Ma‘bar and its Kingdom”, pp. 600-6.

³ Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India under Muhammedan Rule*, p. 124.

⁴ Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 10.

life, his outstanding intellectual curiosity had led him to question some of the fundamental beliefs and practices of Islam, which made him into a skeptic. Since Baranī was one of the chief spokesmen of the conservative ‘*ulamā*’, he considered the following contemporary scholars responsible for ‘corrupting’ the ideas of the Sultan:⁵ Malik Sa‘ad al-Dīn *Manṭiqī* (the logician),⁶ ‘Ubayd, the poet,⁷ Mawlānā Najm al-Dīn Intishār⁸ and Mawlānā ‘Alīm al-Dīn.⁹ According to Baranī, as a result of their ‘evil’ influence, the Sultan’s belief in the fundamentals of Islam had been shaken.¹⁰ Jamālī adds the names of Mawlānā ‘Alī Muttaqī Qandzī and Pīr Uftām Sunāmī to the list provided by Baranī, and maintains that in their company, the Sultan had become inclined towards *kufṛ* (unbelief).¹¹ However, later the Sultan gave up his atheistic tendencies, and became eventually convinced of the truth of the fundamental beliefs and practices of Islam.¹²

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq conceived novel schemes and undertook innovative projects in different spheres of state, society and economy. Two of his

⁵ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 465.

⁶ Malik Sa‘ad al-Dīn was a disciple of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, and a friend of Amīr Khusrau. He was also a courtier of Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Firūz Khaljī, Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī, Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq and Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. Baranī has labeled him as *manṭaqī* in a derogatory sense. *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 198, 424, 454, 465.

⁷ ‘Ubayd was a poet, who was a close associate of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq when he was still a prince. Baranī mentions the name of ‘Ubayd among the list of scholars in the reign of Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī, and calls him ‘Ubayd Ḥakīm, meaning the wise. *Ibid.*, p. 360. Jamālī mentions his name as ‘Ubayd of Samarqand. *Idem*, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 94. According to Baranī, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah and ‘Iṣāmī, ‘Ubayd was a poet as well as a jurist, who was executed by Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq. See details in Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 447-49, and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Ajā’ib al-Asfār*, p. 91; also see translator’s note on ‘Ubayd, p. 94, n.2, and ‘Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 384-85. According to Sirhindī, ‘Ubayd had entered the fold of discipleship of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’, but he was expelled from the Shaykh’s circle when he maltreated a newly convert disciple of the Shaykh. For details, see Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 94-95.

⁸ Baranī mentions his name among the scholars of the reign of Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī. *Idem*, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 354.

⁹ According to Baranī, Mawlānā ‘Alīm al-Dīn was a renowned scholar of philosophy. *Ibid.*, 465.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 465.

¹¹ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 94.

¹² Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehli kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 322-23.

projects, which provide an insight into his ingenuity, are the following: First, in 1326-27, the Sultan ordered the Muslim populace of Delhi to migrate and settle in Dēvāgīr (later named Dawlatabād) in Deccan, which acquired the status of the second capital of the Sultanate. After a few years, the people were allowed to return to Delhi.¹³ Secondly, in 1330, the Sultan introduced token currency of copper in the Sultanate.¹⁴ Though the two projects were not very successful, the inventiveness of the Sultan is evident from them.

The failure of these projects had disastrous consequences for the society and economy. They created widespread discontent among the common people, and alienated them from the regime. Owing to financial crisis arising out of failure of these projects, the Sultan increased agricultural tax in the Dōāb, the territory between rivers Ganges and Jumnā, which was the most fertile region of the Sultanate.¹⁵ The discontent and revolts in the Dōāb had a spill-over effect, as rebellions in the region spread to other provinces, where people feared imposition of similar measures by the government. It marked the

¹³ See note 106 in this chap. (infra).

¹⁴ Token currency of copper was introduced due to scarcity of silver in the Sultanate in those days, and was not meant to refill the treasury. Gold was in abundance, and thus the scheme was not a result of bankruptcy, as maintained by Farishtah. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 13. Moreover, the Sultan wanted to pay regular pays to his huge army. The new coins were issued to provide for a substitute for silver, but the token currency failed owing to many reasons: First, distrustful of the Sultan, the ignorant people thought that the state wanted to rob the wealth of the people. ‘Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 441-42. Secondly, the copper coins could easily be forged and minted in houses. Since people had forged coins in huge quantities, they became devalued, and people started refusing to accept them. After remaining in circulation for four years, the token coins were withdrawn, and people exchanged the forged coins for real coins, which adversely affected the state economy. For details, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 475-76, and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 102-3. See also Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, pp. 100-17, and Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, pp. 132-35.

¹⁵ There are conflicting opinions of historians about the exact rate of increase in the tax. Baranī’s statement is vague. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 473. Agha Mahdi Husain infers that the tax was raised to 20%. He also cites Moreland, who has interpreted Baranī’s statement as “rhetorical, not arithmetical”. For a brief discussion, see Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, p. 136, n.3. This measure created discontent among the agriculturalists, who eventually revolted against the regime. The region was also struck by worst famine and drought, which lasted for years (1335-41) adding to the misery and distress of the people.

beginning of the second phase of the reign, which was characterized by widespread unrest and disorder in the length and breadth of the Empire. In order to curb these rebellions, the Sultan inflicted severe and ruthless punishments on the dissidents, which further alienated the people from the regime.

As for the religious orientation of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, it has been analyzed in detail by Nizami¹⁶ and to some extent by Işlāhī.¹⁷ The Sultan was a practicing Muslim who strictly observed all the obligatory rites of Islam.¹⁸ He officially enforced the holding of prayer (*ṣalāt*) five times a day, and those who were negligent were punished.¹⁹ He had also banned the consumption of liquor in the Sultanate,²⁰ as he himself did not indulge in drinking unlike most of the other Sultans of Delhi. He was free from many other vices which were common among the ruling elite in those days. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, while still a prince, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was a devotee of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'. After the demise of the Shaykh, he constructed a splendid mausoleum over his grave.²¹ After becoming the Sultan, he visited the shrine of Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn of Ajmer.²² The Sultan became a disciple of Shaykh 'Alā' al-

¹⁶ For a detailed analysis, see Niẓāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 329-333.

¹⁷ Işlāhī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī aur Shari'at-i Islāmiyyah*, pp. 38-39.

¹⁸ Baranī, *Tārikh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 460, 506, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, p. 97, and Farishtah, *Tārikh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 11.

¹⁹ For details, see Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, pp. 97, 138. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, even the professional singers used to pray during his reign. p. 51.

²⁰ Al-Qalqashandī informs that once the Sultan arrested one of his Khāns and confiscated his property as he used to drink wine. Idem, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, (Spies), p. 64. See also the statements of Shihāh al-Dīn ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umrī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mumālik al-Amsār*, Eng. trans. of chap. dealing with India, Otto Spies (Aligarh: Muslim University Press, n.d.) as cited in Niẓāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 332.

²¹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 154.

²² 'Işāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, p. 447. The Sultan is said to be the first recorded visitor to the shrine in Ajmer. Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'īn al-dīn Chishtī of Ajmer*, p. 97.

Dīn of Ajōdhan (d. 1334),²³ a grandson of Bābā Farīd. After the demise of Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, he constructed his huge mausoleum within the premises of Bābā Farīd’s tomb.²⁴ However, the influence of the Shaykh is not traceable in the personal conduct and policies of the Sultan.²⁵ Therefore, it can be inferred that the discipleship of the Sultan to the Shaykh was more symbolic and ceremonial than actual. According to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, the Sultan was a devotee of a Sufī woman named Bībī Awliyā’, who lived in Delhi.²⁶

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was very fond of the company of ‘*ulamā*’, and holding discourses with them. According to Qalqashandī, there used to be two hundred jurists with the Sultan at meals. Moreover, even during his military campaigns, the ‘*ulamā*’ used to accompany him.²⁷ He had given his daughters in marriage to the sons of the *Malik al-‘Ulamā*’, *Shaykh al-Islām*, and *Ṣadr-i Jahān*.²⁸ He was particularly favourably inclined towards the religious scholars and ‘*ulamā*’ of the Muslim lands, whom he preferred to the local ‘*ulamā*’. He used to grant *jāgīrs* and awards, as well as high posts, to the foreign ‘*ulamā*’.²⁹ Not only did he send them cash offerings, he also invited them to India. For instance, Mawlānā Burhān al-Dīn of Samarqand was sent forty thousand *dīnārs*, and invited to India, whereas Qādī Majd al-Dīn of Shīrāz was sent ten

²³ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*’, p. 196. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah has mistakenly written the name of Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn (Bābā Farīd) instead of his grandson, Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. Idem, ‘*Ajā’ib al-Asfār*’, p. 34. The statement by Māndavī that the Sultan was a disciple of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ is incorrect. Idem, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 46. It appears that the Sultan was only a devotee of the Shaykh.

²⁴ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*’, p. 196.

²⁵ Habib, “Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh-i-Dehli as a Great Historical Personality” in *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, p. 367.

²⁶ ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, p. 304.

²⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A’shā*, (Spies), p. 72.

²⁸ Nizāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 353.

²⁹ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, ‘*Ajā’ib al-Asfār*’, p. 4, 112, and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 107.

thousand *tankahs* by the Sultan.³⁰ Similarly, when Mawlānā Nāṣir al-Dīn Wā'iz Tirmizī came to India, he was granted one hundred thousand *dīnārs* (gold coins) along with two hundred slaves by the Sultan.³¹ In a similar manner, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah was also well-received by the Sultan, who appointed him the *qāḍī* of Delhi, and also granted him *jāgīr*.³² Moreover, the Sultan was also fond of the company of Hindu *jōgīs*.³³

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's contemporary intellectual scene reveals considerable development of *fiqh* or studies on Muslim jurisprudence. His reign is considered to be a golden era of studies of *fiqh* in India, as a galaxy of jurists flourished in the Sultanate of Delhi, and a number of commentaries on major works on *fiqh* were written during this era. Some of the renowned jurists of the age were Mawlānā Mu'in al-Dīn 'Imrānī,³⁴ Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn of Delhi (d. 1362), Saiyyid Yūsuf ibn Jamāl Ḥusaynī of Multan (d. 1388) and Mawlānā Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar.³⁵ Moreover, many contemporary Sufis were also well-versed in *fiqh*. Shaykh Naṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the Chishtī leader, was given the title of Abū Hanifah Thānī (the second Abū Hanifah) for his knowledge of *fiqh*.³⁶ It seems that the traditional gulf between *fiqh* and Sufism had been somewhat bridged in that era. The contemporary intellectual scene dominated by studies on *fiqh* influenced the Sultan as well, for he used to take keen interest in *fiqh*.

³⁰ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, p. 121.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 215-18.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 266, 267-68.

³⁴ Mawlānā Mu'in al-Dīn 'Imrānī wrote commentaries on *Talwih*, *Ḥussāmī*, *Kanz al-Daqā'iq* and *al-Manār*. For a brief biographical note, see Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, pp. 69-70 and 'Alī, *Tadhkira-'i 'Ulamā-'i Hind*, pp. 499-500.

³⁵ Qāḍī Ḥamīd al-Dīn of Delhi wrote a commentary on *Hidāyah*, while Saiyyid Yūsuf ibn Jamāl Ḥusaynī of Multan wrote a commentary on *al-Manār*. Mawlānā Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar was also a prolific jurist who wrote more than a dozen works on *fiqh*. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, p. 58.

³⁶ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, pp. 12, 34.

The reign of the Sultan is considered to represent “a struggle between philosophical rationalism and ecclesiastical dogmatism.”³⁷ On one hand, there was a gradual growth of rationalistic tendencies, and on the other, there was considerable development in the field of *fiqh*. Probably combining the two very different types of intellectual influences, the Sultan had become somewhat critical of blind conformism or *taqlīd* in religious matters, as a result of his rational approach. Nizami even infers that the Sultan considered himself authorized to undertake individual *ijtihād* (independent reasoning and judgment).³⁸

One can also discern the influence of the thought of Imām Taqī al-Dīn Abū 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) on the Sultan. Imām Ibn Taymiyyah was a renowned Hanbalī theologian and jurist of the fourteenth century, who lived in Syria and Egypt. Not only did he protest against the rigidity of the various schools of *fiqh*, he was also critical of many Sufi doctrines and practices, such as tomb-worship, visitation of graves, exaggerated reverence of Sufi Shaykhs, and intercession of Sufis.³⁹ He attacked some of his contemporary Sufi groups for their behaviour, which was not in conformity with the *Shari'ah*. He also denounced the philosophy of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* (the Unity of Being/Phenomena, or Ontological Monism) propounded by Ibn al-'Arabī.⁴⁰ That was

³⁷ Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, p. 259.

³⁸ Nizāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehli kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 334.

³⁹ For views of the Imām on these issues, see Imām Taqī al-Dīn Abū 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah, *Kitāb al-Wasilah*, Urdu trans. Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Ṣiddiqī (Lahore: Idārah-'i Tarjumān al-Sunnah, 1969), and Idem, *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqīm*, (*Ṣirāt-i Mustaqīm kē Taqāḍē*), abridged Urdu trans. 'Abd al-Razzāq Malihabādī (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997). For a detailed analysis, see S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, ed. and Eng. trans. Muhiuddin Ahmad, vol. II, 3d ed., (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1997), pp. 73-92.

⁴⁰ For a brief discussion, see chap. 6, notes 56 and 57 (*infra*).

why, Ibn Taymiyyah had to encounter the opposition of two of the most influential Sufis of Egypt: Ibn 'Atā Allāh (d. 1309/10), a pupil of Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Mursī, and Karīm al-Dīn al-Amūlī (d. 1310/11).⁴¹ Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that Ibn Taymiyyah never condemned Sufism *per se*, but only attacked the “inadmissible deviations in doctrine, ritual or morals” of many Sufis.⁴² His critique of the rigidity of juristic schools was shared by the Sufis in general. His writings had become popular throughout the Muslim world during his lifetime. His pupil Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz Ardabilī visited India during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, who received the Shaykh with tremendous respect.⁴³ The visit of the Shaykh to India must have reinforced the influence of Ibn Taymiyyah's teachings on the Sultan.⁴⁴

As for the personal disposition of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, he was endowed with firm resolve and determination. The measures he introduced in the Sultanate were motivated by altruistic considerations. He is said to have been extremely generous and used to confer lavish grants and gifts on the people.⁴⁵ At times, he displayed profound sympathy, kind-heartedness, forgiveness and benevolence.⁴⁶ The famine-relief efforts in the Sultanate bear ample testimony to it, as the state distributed

⁴¹ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. III, art. Ibn Taymiyya by H. Laoust, p. 952.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 953. For details of life history, relationship with political authorities, contributions to Sunnī theology, and works, see pp. 951-55. See also Serajul Haque, “Ibn Taimiyyah” in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. Sharif, vol. II, pp. 796-819.

⁴³ The Sultan kissed the feet of the Imām, and granted him 2000 gold coins. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, p. 120.

⁴⁴ For a brief analysis of Ibn Taymiyyah's influence on the Sultan, see Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 376-80.

⁴⁵ For instance, see Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, pp. 113-22.

⁴⁶ For instance, the Sultan pardoned 'Ayn al-Mulk Māhrō, who had revolted against the Sultan. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 491, and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 110.

food among the people for six months free of cost.⁴⁷ The Muslim populace of Delhi, which was ordered to migrate to Dawlatabād, was provided all kinds of facilities of transportation. On the road from Delhi to Dawlatabād, trees were planted, and rest houses were constructed, where lodging and food was provided to the immigrants.⁴⁸ The Sultan lavishly distributed gifts upon their arrival in the new city.⁴⁹ Similarly, after withdrawing the token currency, the Sultan gave the people coins of real value in lieu of the forged coins.⁵⁰ Hence, the humanistic considerations in the implementation of his mega-projects are difficult to be overlooked. The Sultan also took keen interest in the development of agriculture, and extended loans to the farmers.⁵¹ In Delhi alone, the Sultan constructed seventy hospitals for the treatment of the sick.⁵² He not only banned the practice of begging in Delhi, but the poor and the needy were supported by the state.⁵³ However, this is not to deny the authoritarianism of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq in implementation of his policies, and his cruelty and brutality in punishing the rebels. As a matter of fact, when the projects and measures introduced by him failed to achieve their desired results, and proved counter-productive for the people as well as the state, he became extremely disappointed and frustrated. In a bid to put things right, the Sultan became impatient and hasty, which aggravated the situation. He also became aggressive and vindictive towards those who obstructed his plans. His ruthless and brutal punishments to the people proves

⁴⁷ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, pp. 140, 202.

⁴⁸ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 98-99, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 18.

⁴⁹ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 474, and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 102.

⁵⁰ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 476, and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 103.

⁵¹ Baranī has used the word *sōndhār* and Farishtah has used the word *taqāwī* for loan. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 482, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 31. For discussion, see Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, pp. 283-84, see also n.87.

⁵² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, (Spies), p. 29.

⁵³ Shihāh al-Dīn al-'Umri, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, as cited in Niẓāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 381. See also Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, p. 309.

this point. Lane-Poole analyzes the failure of the Sultan's policies and his subsequent attitude as such:

To him what seemed good must be done at once, and when it proved impossible or unsuccessful his disappointment reached the verge of frenzy, and he wreaked his wrath indiscriminately upon the unhappy offenders who could not keep pace with his imagination. Hence with the best intentions, excellent ideas, but no balance of patience, no sense of proportion, Mohammad Taghlak was a transcendent failure.⁵⁴

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was highly unpredictable in nature. His contemporary historians have expressed contradictory views about him. Baranī characterizes him as a "mixture of opposites",⁵⁵ as he was considered to be the wisest and the most foolish, and merciful and tyrannical at the same time. 'Iṣāmī portrays him as a cruel and irreligious person, and an enemy of Islam. Branding him as a *kāfir* or non-believer, he urges the people to rebel against the Sultan.⁵⁶ The Moorish traveler, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, who came to India in 1333, also blows hot and cold in the same breath like Baranī. He maintains that the Sultan was just and hospitable,⁵⁷ but also records the instances of his ferocious cruelty.⁵⁸ The views about the Sultan and his policies expressed by his contemporary historians such as Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī, 'Iṣāmī and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah seem to be prejudiced owing to their personal reasons.

⁵⁴ Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India under Muhammedan Rule*, p. 125.

⁵⁵ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 460, 504. Following Baranī, historians such as Niẓām al-Dīn Bakhshī, Farishtah and Badāyūnī observe that the Sultan was an epitome of good and evil simultaneously. Bakhshī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, p. 99, Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 11, and Al-Badāonī, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, (Ranking), vol. I, p. 318. Similarly, Moreland brands his conduct as "a mass of inconsistencies." W. H. Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Moslem India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), pp. 45-46.

⁵⁶ For instance, see 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, pp. 491-92, 569-70. It is mainly on the authority of 'Iṣāmī that the later day historians such as Niẓām al-Dīn Bakhshī and Farishtah have also wrongly charged the Sultan with irreligiousness. Bakhshī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, p. 99, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, pp. 9, 11. For a critical examination of the charges of irreligiousness against the Sultan, see Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, pp. 326-32.

⁵⁷ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, pp. 97, 137-38, 139.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 144-45.

ambassador.⁶² Later, Ibn Battūṭah went to Ma‘bar, which was under the control of rebels, and married a sister of the wife of Jalāl al-Dīn Aḥsan Shāh, who became the first king of Ma‘bar.⁶³ There is no gainsaying that the opinion of Ibn Battūṭah had become adverse owing to his close connection and relation with the rebels of the Delhi Sultanate.

To conclude, owing to the highly subjective writings of the medieval historians regarding Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, which were uncritically accepted by later day historians, such as Sirhindī,⁶⁴ Badāyūnī,⁶⁵ Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad⁶⁶ and Farishtah,⁶⁷ an impartial and objective study of the ideas and policies of the Sultan is quite difficult to undertake. It is probably for this reason, that he is considered to be one of the most misperceived and misunderstood of all the kings of India. The judgment of Lane-Poole that the Sultan’s ideas were far beyond his age,⁶⁸ and the oft-quoted opinion of Mahdi Husain that the Sultan was far ahead of his age,⁶⁹ also betray the predisposition of the modern historians about an entire age. Such a judgment not only tends to cast a slur on an entire age, it also implies that the Sultan was a misfit in the fourteenth century. The

⁶² It is important to note that Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was the only ruler of the Delhi Sultanate who tried to establish diplomatic relations with China, which was ruled by Emperor Sunti (r. 1333-68), better known as Togan Timur, at that time. The Chinese Emperor sent his envoy to the court of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, who in return sent an embassy to China under Ibn Battūṭah. Ibn Battūṭah went to China, but instead of returning to India, he went back to his native country. See details in Yar Muhammad Khan, “Relations of the Sultans of Delhi with Foreign Rulers”, *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, University of the Punjab, Lahore, vol. XXI, no. 3 (July 1984), pp. 32-34.

⁶³ Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, Preface, p. x.

⁶⁴ For instance, see Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 114-15.

⁶⁵ Al-Badāonī, for instance, refers to the blood-thirstiness of the Sultan, and talks about his excessive tyranny and oppression. Idem, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, (Ranking), vol. I, pp. 316-17, 319.

⁶⁶ Bakhshī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, p. 99.

⁶⁷ Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, pp. 9, 11.

⁶⁸ Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India under Muhammedan Rule*, p. 124.

⁶⁹ The complete statement runs as follows: “...the verdict of history is that he was neither visionary nor impractical, nor inherently unsound, nor were his grandiose schemes beyond the range of human possibility. He was far in advance of his age...” Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, p. 216; see also p. 197.

Sultan must be treated as a product of his intellectual and social environment, and an understanding of his views and policies must facilitate appreciation of the intellectual developments of an entire era.

5.2 Religio-political Ideals of the Sultan

The religio-political philosophy of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was a departure from the previous reigns. The Sultan believed that ‘politics and religion are twins’,⁷⁰ unlike Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī, who believed in the separation of religion and politics.⁷¹ Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq wanted to bridge the yawning gulf between religion and politics. Ideologically, the Sultan might have been influenced by the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah, who considered religion and state to be indissolubly linked.⁷² In practical terms, the political authority of the Sultan had reached its zenith owing to the vastness of the Sultanate’s territories, comprising twenty-three provinces. It was this increase of his domain, which might have prompted him to extend his authority to the sphere of religion as well. Moreover, the Sultan was desperately in search of an *imām*, a leader, before whom he could submit. In the opinion of Aziz Ahmad, the *imām* he sought was not a “Pope-like *quṭb* or *autād* in his own state, but a symbol of the disciplined political entity of the entire *ummah*, the *khalīfah* who could be the source of the radiation of religio-political and not religio-mystical authority.”⁷³

⁷⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 196, 206.

⁷¹ Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, p. 275.

⁷² *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. III, art. Ibn Taymiyya by H. Laoust, p. 954.

⁷³ Aziz Ahmad, “The Sufi and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India”, p. 150.

It seems that the concept of *khilāfat* had gradually become central to the political creed of the Sultan. After the destruction of Baghdad and the assassination of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph al-Musta‘shim in 1258 by the Mongol leader, Halāgū Khān, the Muslim world remained without a Caliph for three and a half years. Later, the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate was restored in Egypt by the Mamlūk Sultan Baybars. However, in the Sultanate of Delhi, the name of al-Musta‘shim continued to be inscribed on the coinage long after his death. Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq requested his contemporary ‘Abbāsīd Caliph of Egypt, al-Mustakfi Bi-Allāh, to grant him an investiture of authority (*manshūr*), which the former received in 1343.⁷⁴ Moreover, the Sultan also received a descendant of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mustanṣar Bi-Allāh in Delhi, with a great deal of respect.⁷⁵

Mahdi Husain observes that the submission of the Sultan to the Caliph, who wielded religious as well as political authority, had previously been merely formal and theoretical. Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq tried to make it “real and practical. The reason was as much political as religious.”⁷⁶ The fast eroding political legitimacy of his regime, particularly among the *umarā’*, high state officials and the religious notables, was expressed in a series of revolts and rebellions, which prompted the Sultan to seek legitimacy for his rule from the Caliph. By political submission to the Caliph, though merely symbolic in nature, the Sultan hoped to regain the trust and confidence of the discontented sections of the Muslims society in the Sultanate. Although there had been rebellions in the Sultanate during the previous regimes, many of them among the Hindus,

⁷⁴ See details in Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *‘Ajā’ib al-Asfār*, p. 115, and Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 492-96. The Sultan struck coins in the name of Caliph al-Hākīm II (r. 1342-52). See also Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, p. 169.

⁷⁵ For details, see Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *‘Ajā’ib al-Asfār*, pp. 125-30.

⁷⁶ Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, p. 170.

but this time the opponents of the Sultan were primarily Muslims, particularly the religious sections of the Muslim society. As pointed out above, the foreign 'ulamā' were respected and patronized by the Sultan. The native 'ulamā' perceived them as rivals, as their own influence lessened, and their monopoly of religio-political affairs was threatened. Moreover, some of the 'ulamā' and the Sufis criticized the tyrannical and oppressive measures of the Sultan.⁷⁷ Since the 'ulamā' were themselves discontented, they supported many of the rebels in the Delhi Sultanate.

The political ideals of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq can be assessed well from his plans to conquer Khurasan and Qarāchil. In 1328, the Sultan planned to conquer Khurasan (eastern Persia), and recruited a huge army of 3,70,000 soldiers for this purpose. However, the plan could never materialize owing to some political developments in Persia, Egypt and Transoxiana. The disbandment of the army caused unemployment and discontent among the people.⁷⁸ Amīr Khūrd informs that the Sultan wanted to annex Khurasan and Turkistan in order to overthrow the Mongols, and for this purpose, he had also exhorted the people to wage *jihād* or holy war against them.⁷⁹ In the same year, the Sultan sent a military expedition to Qarāchil (the region adjacent to China and Tibet), which remained unsuccessful, and the whole army was destroyed.⁸⁰ There

⁷⁷ For details, see pp. 381-83 of this chap. (infra).

⁷⁸ It was owing to some diplomatic and political developments in Persia, Egypt and Transoxiana that the Sultan gave up his plan of conquering Khurasan. These developments included the restoration of friendly relations between Abū Sa'īd of Persia and al-Nāṣir of Egypt, and the deposition of Tarmahshirīn. As a result of these developments, the coalition formed against Sultan Abū Sa'īd of Persia was broken. Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, pp. 124-25. The army, which remained unused, was partly disbanded. It caused a heavy drain on the state's exchequer, as the soldiers were paid for full one year. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 476-77.

⁷⁹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 271.

⁸⁰ The military expedition in Qarāchil was meant to curb the Chinese advance on the Rajput states in Himalayas on the Indian frontier. For the purpose, a huge army was recruited, which included one

were religious considerations behind the Sultan's intention of conquering Khurasan, but the Qarāchil expedition was largely motivated by his desire for territorial expansion and some strategic considerations.

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's policy towards the native Indians, including the Hindus and the Muslim converts, also reveals his enlightened and tolerant attitude. He followed an open policy of recruitment of the indigenous people, particularly those who were considered low-born among the Hindus and the Muslims both. They were not discriminated against in government services, were employed in large numbers, and also rose to high positions in the Sultanate.⁸¹ The Mongols were also treated well by the Sultan.⁸² One of the reasons for adopting such a policy was that the Sultan distrusted the old officers of the state, who were unable to keep pace with his novel ideas and innovative schemes. Nonetheless, these policies were resented by the so-called highborn Muslims, as their chances of appointment and promotion in government services were minimized. The grievances of these so-called highborn Muslims belonging to the aristocratic families were voiced by Baranī in his writings,⁸³ who advised the Sultan to

hundred thousand soldiers recruited for the Khurasan expedition. After some initial victories, the military commander Khusrau Malik transgressed the orders of the Sultan, and entered in Tibet, where the army was overtaken by rains followed by the outbreak of plague. Consequently, the entire army was destroyed, and only a few survived to tell the tale of the disaster. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 477-78, and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, pp. 167-68. Sirhindī informs that the number of troops in the expedition was 80,000. See details idem, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 103-4. For a critical analysis, see Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, pp. 126-37, and Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, pp. 126-31.

⁸¹ Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, "Social Mobility in the Delhi Sultanate", in *Medieval India I*, ed. Irfan Habib, pp. 27-28. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, a Negroid named Badr Ḥabshī was appointed the ruler of 'Alā'pur by the Sultan. Idem, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, p. 260.

⁸² Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 499.

⁸³ Baranī mentions the names of such people along with their old professional/caste identities in mockery. Ibid., p. 505.

debar the so-called base-born from official positions.⁸⁴ In addition, the religious sections of the Muslim society also resented the Sultan's treatment of the '*ulamā*' and the Sufis.

5.3 Policy towards the '*Ulamā*' and the Sufis

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was not merely a man of ideas, he was a man of action as well. He translated his religio-political ideals into concrete policies. Convinced of a symbiotic relationship between religion and politics, he wanted to involve the religious notables in the regime, and thus make them work under the umbrella of the state. The Sultan argued that like the Companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), who assisted the Pious Caliphs in discharge of their Caliphal duties, he also required the support of his contemporary '*ulamā*' and Sufis in conducting the affairs of the state.⁸⁵ As pointed out earlier, the '*ulamā*' were considered to be the traditional custodians of religious authority. The amalgamation of political and religious authorities, as desired by the Sultan, could benefit the holders of political authority, by lending some degree of credibility and legitimacy to the regime, but quite contrarily, it could also undermine the religious authority of the '*ulamā*' and the social prestige of the Sufis in the society.

In addition to the '*ulamā*', Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq tried to assign various official responsibilities to the Sufis as well. Not many of them were inclined towards accepting such an arrangement, whereby they had to compromise their freedom and autonomy, and submit to political authorities. Consequently, they were cajoled, threatened, coerced, and even punished by the Sultan. However, this is not to deny that

⁸⁴ Irfan Habib, "Ziyā Baranī's Vision of the State", pp. 31-32.

⁸⁵ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, '*Ajā'ib al-Asfār*', p. 145.

there were many who welcomed the government offer, and enthusiastically accepted official positions. The Sultan undertook the following measures, which adversely affected the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis in the Sultanate:

5.3.1 Employing the Sufis and the ‘*Ulamā*’ in the State Service

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq felt the need of the advice and guidance of the ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufis in conduct of the state. He wanted to harness their services for the Sultanate, and thereby, for the cause of Islam. Therefore, many eminent ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufis were pressurized to join the government service by him. The Sultan wanted to transform their role in the polity, and see them in royal attire, instead of their traditional dress—the *khirqah*.⁸⁶ With this ideal in mind, the Sultan sent some of them to far flung areas where the Muslim population was quite scanty, in order to propagate the Muslim faith. For instance, Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā, a Chishtī Shaykh and an eminent scholar of his times, was ordered to proceed to Kashmir for this purpose.⁸⁷ Hitherto, no Sultan had ever tried to bring the task of propagation of Islam within the jurisdiction of the state in a formal sense.

The Sultan turned to the descendants of Bābā Farīd, who lived in Ajōdhan. Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn of Ajōdhan, the grandson of Bābā Farīd, was respected and revered by the people at large as much for their ancestor’s spiritual excellence as for their own God-consciousness, austerity and piety. He disliked visiting the royal court.⁸⁸ However,

⁸⁶ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, pp. 215, 218.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁸⁸ When Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn of Multan was returning to Multan after visiting the court in Delhi, he came to Ajōdhan and met Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. When they both met, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn shook

his sons and grandsons accepted high official positions during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. The Sultan entrusted some administrative responsibility in Gujrat to Shaykh Mu‘izz al-Dīn (d. 1338), the son of Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn.⁸⁹ Similarly, Shaykh ‘Alam al-Dīn, another son of Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, was conferred the official title of the *Shaykh al-Islām* and thus, he was entrusted with the task of supervision of the Sufi establishments.⁹⁰ After his demise, his son, Shaykh Maḥzar al-Dīn, was elevated to the position of the *Shaykh al-Islām*.⁹¹ In this way, the descendants of Bābā Farīd were offered high official positions by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.

The Sultan also turned to the family of Kirmānīs in Delhi, which had entered the fold of Chishtī *Silsilah*, and was devoted to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’. The contemporary hagiographer, Amīr Khūrd Kirmānī, also belonged to this family. The Sultan appointed Saiyyid Kamāl al-Dīn Amīr Aḥmad, son of Saiyyid Muḥammad Kirmānī and an uncle of Amīr Khūrd, as his adviser, and gave him the title of Malik Mu‘azzam.⁹² Another family-member of Kirmānīs, Saiyyid Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥusayn Kirmānī, son of Saiyyid Muḥammad Kirmānī, went to Dawlatabād on the request of the *wazīr*, Aḥmad Ayaz, the *Khwājah-i Jahān*.⁹³

hands with Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. After the former left, the latter took bath as he had shaken hands with Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn who had visited the royal court in Delhi. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁸⁹ There was unrest in the region, and Shaykh Mu‘izz al-Dīn was killed during the rebellion of Malik Ṭaghī in Gujrat. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 508, 518, and Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 196.

⁹⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 196.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁹² Previously, Saiyyid Kamāl al-Dīn held the position of Khān in the imperial army. Once he was imprisoned by the Sultan, but later released. After release from prison, he was elevated to the rank of Malik Mu‘azzam. See details in *ibid.*, pp. 214-15.

⁹³ However, the Saiyyid accepted the request on the condition that he would not give up wearing his dress of the Sufis, and would not accept any official position. See details in *ibid.*, pp. 218.

Similarly, Khwājah Karīm al-Dīn Samarqandī, a resident of Bayānah and a disciple of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, was granted the titles of *Shaykh al-Islām* and *Anwar Rā'ē Malik Satgāūṅ*, and entrusted with some administrative responsibility in Satgāūṅ (Bengal).⁹⁴ In a like manner, as pointed out earlier, Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Shaykh Aḥmad Jām was punished when he refused to accept some official position offered by the Sultan. He was also expelled to Dawlatabād, and was allowed to return to Delhi after seven years, only to be given charge of the *dīwān al-mustakhrāj* (department for the realization of revenue arrears).⁹⁵ Though in some cases the Sultan wanted to harness the services of the Sufis and 'ulamā' for the state, in some instances, it seems that he tried to get rid of some of them by sending them to places far away from the capital.

As discussed in the third chapter, the attitude of the Suhrawardī Sufis towards the state and political authorities was quite different from that of the Chishtīs. The Suhrawardī Sufis believed in associating with the rulers, and had extended support to them on many occasions as well. In the thirteenth and fourteenth century India, Multan was the main centre of the *Silsilah* Suhrawardiyyah, their second most important centre being Uch. During the revolt of Bahrām Aibāh Kishlū Khān, the then Governor of Multan, the brother of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn Abū 'l-Fatḥ named Shaykh 'Imād al-Dīn sided with the Sultan. In fact, Shaykh 'Imād had close resemblance with the Sultan. So he was seated in the Sultan's place under the royal canopy during the military assault on the rebel forces, which mistook him for the Sultan and killed him. As a compensation for

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 307, and Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 88.

⁹⁵ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, pp. 145-46.

Shaykh 'Imād's murder, his brother, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn Abū 'l-Fatḥ of Multan was granted hundred villages as *jāgīr* by the Sultan.⁹⁶

Though unconditional, the acceptance of this huge land grant adversely affected the autonomy and independence of the *khānqāh* of the Shaykh. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah informs that Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn used to seek the permission of the governor of Multan before providing accommodation to any one in the *khānqāh*.⁹⁷ In this way, the Suhrawardī *khānqāh* in Multan was virtually turned into a state department by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. In this way, the Sufī tradition of freedom in a *khānqāh* was compromised by allowing state interference in it. Nonetheless, the association of the Suhrawardīs with the regime had some benefits as well. After having suppressed the rebellion, the Sultan intended to massacre the inhabitants of the city of Multan. According to Baranī, when Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn came to know about the Sultan's intentions, he requested the Sultan to refrain from it. The Sultan accepted his request for clemency, and also pardoned the prisoners.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, among the Suhrawardī Shaykhs, there were others who refused to serve the regime. Saiyyid Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī, better known as Makhdūm-i Jahānīyaṅ (d.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 165. 'Iṣāmī mentions the name of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn's brother as Ismā'il. Idem, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, p. 424. Probably, 'Imād al-Dīn was the title of Shaykh Ismā'il.

⁹⁷ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, p. 23.

⁹⁸ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 479, Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 100-101, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 20. However, 'Iṣāmī states that Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn retreated into meditation for a week, and when he came out of it, he was apprised of the on-going massacre in the city. Upon this, he requested the Sultan to stop it, when already a lot many lives had been lost. Idem, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, p. 427. The statement of 'Iṣāmī has been uncritically accepted by Nizāmī, who has given it credence over the statement of Baranī. Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 357-58. Nonetheless, Rizvi has rejected the account of 'Iṣāmī. Idem, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 213. As for the account of the third contemporary historian, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, he is silent about it, as he was not an eye-witness to it. Idem, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, pp. 164-66.

1383/4), was the most renowned Suhrawardī Shaykh of Uch.⁹⁹ Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān was a grandson of Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā's disciple, Saiyyid Jalāl al-Dīn Surkh.¹⁰⁰ He was not only given the title of *Shaykh al-Islām* by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, but forty *khānqāhs* were also given under his supervision, and he was offered a *jāgīr* in Sivistān (Sehwan) in Sindh as well. However, the Shaykh left for Makkah for performing pilgrimage. He spent some years in traveling in the Muslim lands, and returned to India during the reign of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq.¹⁰¹ In this way, Saiyyid Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī avoided being a recipient of boons and favours from the state. The Sultan also offered a land grant to Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manēyri (b. 1263-d. 1381) of *Silsilah Firdawsiyyah*, a renowned Sufi of Bihar, which he reluctantly accepted, but later returned to Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq.¹⁰²

Notwithstanding the Sultan's religious policy of employing the religious dignitaries in the service of the state, some of the '*ulamā*' and Sufis were left undisturbed by him, and they carried on their academic or literary work and spiritual engagements. These included, among others, Mawlānā Mu'in al-Dīn 'Imrānī, Khwājah Ḍiyā' al-Dīn

⁹⁹ For a brief life-sketch, see 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Šūfiyah*, pp. 396-438.

¹⁰⁰ For a brief life-sketch, see Mir Hasan Ali, "Ḥaḍrat Sayyid Jalāl Mir Sirkh [sic] Bukhari of Uch Sharif", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXIX, part I (January 1981), pp. 40-49.

¹⁰¹ Nizāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 359, and Aslam, *Malfūzātī Adab ki Tārīkhī Ahammiyyat*, pp. 207.

¹⁰² 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Šūfiyah*, pp. 347-48. Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā wrote a letter to Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, when the latter asked the Shaykh to pray for him. For Persian text of the letter, see Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad Manēyri, *Maktūbāt-i Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad Manēyri*, MS, Khudā Bakhsh Library, Patna, Letter no. 207, MS. no. 1394, f. 216a, 217. For English translation of the letter, see Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, Appendix I, "Sharaf Maneri's Letter to Sultan Muḥammad the Great", pp. 622-24.

Nakhshabī (d. 1350/1),¹⁰³ a notable disciple of Bābā Farīd, Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Nīlī,¹⁰⁴ a renowned scholar of Awadh and a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, and Shaykh ‘Uthmān Saīyāh of Sunam,¹⁰⁵ a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn of Multan.

5.3.2 Shifting of the ‘*Ulamā*’ and Sufis from Delhi to Dawlatabād

As pointed out earlier, in 1326-27, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq embarked on the project of shifting the Muslim populace of Delhi to Dēvāgīr or Dawlatabād in Deccan.¹⁰⁶

The project had a number of political and religious considerations behind it. Though the territorial stretch of the Delhi Sultanate had been extended to Deccan in the south, the problem of political penetration in its conquered areas was yet to be solved. Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī had conquered many states in Deccan, but he could not annex the conquered territories to the Sultanate, which remained its tributary states. Being quite

¹⁰³ Nizāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 349. For a detailed biographical sketch, see ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Shūfiyah*, pp. 264-300.

¹⁰⁴ He seemed to be left in Delhi after the forced migration of the populace of Delhi, as Ibn Baṭṭūṭah met him in Delhi and attended his sermon. Idem, ‘*Ajā’ib al-Asfār*’, p. 53.

¹⁰⁵ Rizvi infers that Shaykh ‘Uthmān did not leave Delhi during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, as he died there in 1337-38. Idem, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 215.

¹⁰⁶ The plan of the Sultan has been misperceived as the transfer of ‘capital’ from Delhi to Dawlatabād. For instance, see Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, pp. 82, 83. As a matter of fact, Dawlatabād was made the second capital of the Empire. Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A’shā*, (Spies), pp. 27-30. Baranī informs that the imperial forces remained stationed in Delhi, and the state departments and treasury were not shifted to Dawlatabād. In fact, Delhi was never completely abandoned or deserted as portrayed by some historians. For instance, Baranī has given an exaggerated account of the so-called transfer of capital from Delhi to Dawlatabād by stating that “not even a cat or a dog was left in the city”. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 473-74. See also Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Tālib), vol. II, p. 20. Similarly, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah has also made some hyperbolic statements in this regard. For instance, he writes that two men, a blind and a crippled, were left in Delhi after the forced migration. The Sultan ordered one of them to be thrown out of the city with a catapult and the other one to be dragged to Dawlatabād. Idem, ‘*Ajā’ib al-Asfār*’, p. 158. For a critical analysis of the statements of Baranī and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, see Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, pp. 110-23. As for Delhi, the Sultan tried to re-populate it by the ‘*ulamā*’, men of learning, and influential people who were brought from the neighbouring regions, towns and rural areas to Delhi. However, it could never achieve its former glory and grandeur until the decision was reversed. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 474, and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 102, 114. The effort to repopulate Delhi must have given considerable impetus to urbanization.

distant from Delhi, maintaining strong political control in Deccan was an uphill task. Moreover, the social base of the Muslim rule in Deccan was quite weak, owing to the scanty Muslim population in the south. So keeping in view the geo-political and strategic significance of Dawlatabād, which was in the heart of Deccan, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq devised his scheme of inhabiting it with the Muslim population. The city of Dawlatabād was centrally situated, and equidistant from Delhi, Gujrat, Lakhnautī, Satgāūṅ, Sōnārgāūṅ, Tēling (Telingānāh), Ma'bar, Dhaur, Samandar (Dwārāsamudrā) and Kampilah,¹⁰⁷ and thus, it was easier to control these far flung regions from Dawlatabād.

However, the political motives of the Sultan in shifting the Muslim population of Delhi to Deccan cannot be separated from ideological and religious motives. Amīr Khūrd states that the Sultan wanted to make Dawlatabād a centre of Muslim culture by planting a colony of Muslims in the heart of Deccan.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, in order to overcome the problem of political penetration and strengthening the social base of the Muslim rule by propagation of Islam in Deccan, the Sultan ordered the Muslim populace of Delhi, including the *umarā'*, eminent '*ulamā'*' and Sufīs to migrate and settle in Dawlatabād. Al-Qalqashandī informs that the Sultan had ordered to build separate quarters for the troops, *wazīrs*, secretaries, *qāḍīs*, '*ulamā'*', Sufi Shaykhs and *faqīrs* in the second capital.¹⁰⁹ This arrangement must have adversely affected the activities of the Sufi Shaykhs, as it might have isolated them from other groups of the people living in the same city.

¹⁰⁷ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 473-74.

¹⁰⁸ See the statement of Qāḍī Kamāl al-Dīn *Ṣadr-i Jahān* in Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 274.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, (Spies), p. 30.

Some of the renowned ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufis who migrated to Dawlatabād included Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī, Saiyyid Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥusayn ibn Saiyyid Muḥammad Kirmānī (an uncle of Amīr Khūrd),¹¹⁰ a renowned scholar Mawlānā Kamāl al-Dīn of Sāmānah,¹¹¹ and Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Shaykh Aḥmad Jām.¹¹² However, it should be borne in mind that the Sultan’s scheme of shifting the Muslim populace of Delhi to Dawlatabād was not exclusively directed towards the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis of Delhi, as the *umarā*’, many influential families and the royal family itself moved to Dawlatabād. Moreover, some of the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis of Delhi had not migrated to Deccan, and there is no historical evidence that they were forced to migrate. These included, among others, Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Nīlī (a renowned scholar of Awadh and a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn), whom Ibn Baṭṭūṭah met in Delhi and attended his sermon after the forced migration of people,¹¹³ and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the principal successor of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn.¹¹⁴ It can be inferred that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn might not have been left alone in his *jamā’ atkhānah* in Delhi, when the people migrated to Deccan, as many of those associated with him or his *jamā’ atkhānah* must have stayed with him.

The state provided transportation facilities to the migrants, as pointed out earlier.¹¹⁵ Moreover, on reaching Dawlatabād, the Sultan lavishly showered the people with gifts in order to appease them.¹¹⁶ But the forced migration from Delhi to Dawlatabād created problems for the people at large, including the religious sections of the Muslim

¹¹⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 218.

¹¹¹ ‘Abd al-Ḥa’iyy, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, vol. II, p. 156.

¹¹² Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *‘Ajā’ib al-Asfār*, p. 145.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹¹⁴ See pp. 391-92 of this chap. (*infra*).

¹¹⁵ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 98-99.

¹¹⁶ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 474, and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 102.

society. Since Dawlatabād was on 40-day journey from Delhi (about 700 miles from the capital), a lot of elderly people and infants perished on the way because of the hardships of the journey.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the people who were accustomed to living in Delhi for generations were deeply grieved, and could not adjust well in the new environment of Deccan.

Owing to the increasing public complaints and discontent, the decision was reversed in 1337, and people were allowed to return to Delhi. Apparently, the plan was a failure, which estranged the common people as well as the ruling elite, i.e. the *umarā'* and high state officials, the Sufis and the '*ulamā'*' from the regime owing to their forced migration. It also eroded the prestige of the Sultan, provoked criticism of his policies, and caused a heavy drain on the economy as well. Nonetheless, it had far-reaching political, socio-cultural and religious consequences for Deccan. It gave considerable impetus to the spreading of Islam and flourishing of Muslim culture in the south. Politically, the centre of gravity shifted from the north to the south. It was owing to the strength of Muslim population in Deccan, which provided a social base to political rule, that in 1347, a Bahmanī Kingdom was founded in Deccan by 'Alā' al-Dīn Bahman Shāh on the ruins of the Delhi Sultanate. With its capital in Gulbargāh, it held sway for more than one and a half century, after which it fragmented into five petty Sultanates.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ 'Iṣāmī presents an exaggerated account of the problems faced due to the migration of people since his grandfather had perished on his way to Dawlatabād. Idem, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭin*, pp. 430-35.

¹¹⁸ For a brief history of Bahmanī Kingdom and its five successor states, see Majumdar et al., *An Advanced History of India*, pp. 356-65.

5.3.3 Punishments to the Sufis and ‘*Ulamā*’

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq’s patronage of some of the eminent ‘*ulamā*’ of his times notwithstanding, some of the religious dignitaries, including the ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufis, were also ruthlessly punished by him. Owing to the Sultan’s inclination towards *fiqh*, one may assume that the Sultan wanted the Sufis to live and act in complete conformity to the *Sharī‘ah*, but there is no evidence for it. The Sultan, who punished and persecuted the Sufis mainly on political grounds, is not reported to have charged any Sufi with non-conformity to the *Sharī‘ah*, and never used it as a pretext for taking action against any of the so-called *bē-Shar‘* (non-conforming to the *Sharī‘ah*) Sufi groups.

The Sultan ordered the execution of some of his contemporary ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis, but in most of the cases, the reasons for their execution were political rather than religious. They were punished for a host of reasons, ranging from lack of cooperation with the Sultan, to the charges of sedition. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah has mentioned the following cases in which severe punishments were inflicted on religious dignitaries: Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Shaykh Aḥmad Jām was forced to accept some official position, which he later gave up with the sanction of the Sultan. However, when the Sultan again wanted to assign some official responsibility to him, he refused to accept it. Consequently, the Shaykh was tortured, and later put to death.¹¹⁹ Similarly, Shaykh Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Simnānī

¹¹⁹ Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn had refused to accept some government position when offered by the Sultan. Consequently, the Sultan sent him to Dawlatabād, from where he was called back after seven years. Then he was appointed in charge of *dīwān al-mustakhrāj* (department for the realization of revenue arrears). Later, with the permission of the Sultan, the Shaykh gave up the position. The Sultan granted him a barren tract of land, where he constructed his residence and a *khānqāh*. After some time, when the Sultan again summoned him for assigning some official responsibility, he refused to appear in the court. As a result, he was imprisoned and tortured by the Sultan, and later executed. For details, see Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, ‘*Ajā’ib al-Asfār*’, pp. 145-47. Sirhindī has mentioned his name as Shaykhzādah Jāmī. He

was persecuted by the Sultan when he refused to comply with the orders of the Sultan to maltreat Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Shaykh Aḥmad Jām in the court in the Sultan's presence.¹²⁰ Mawlānā 'Afif al-Dīn Kāshānī, a renowned jurist, was executed along with his two friends, when he criticized the agricultural policies of the Sultan.¹²¹ On another occasion, two Sindhi Mawlawīs, who were assigned some official task, were executed at the Sultan's order on the mere suspicion of 'dishonest intentions'.¹²² Shaykh Hūd Qurayshī (the successor of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn of Multan) was accused of embezzlement and conspiracy, and hence executed.¹²³ Shaykh Shams al-Dīn ibn Tāj al-'Ārifīn of Kō'il (modern Aligarh) was summoned by the Sultan, who wanted to see him, but the Shaykh refused to meet him. Later, the Shaykh was put to death by the Sultan on mere suspicion of treason.¹²⁴ Shaykh Ḥaydarī was executed by the Sultan when he extended his support to Qāḍī Jalāl Afghānī, who had rebelled against the Sultan in Khanbāyat.¹²⁵ The *Khaṭīb al-Khutbah* (head of the deliverers of sermons, or the chief preacher) of Delhi was

was beheaded by the Sultan as he called the latter a tyrant. See details in idem, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 116.

¹²⁰ Shaykh Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Simnānī was later expelled to Tēlingānah, and after some time, he was appointed as *qāḍī* in Warrangal. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, '*Ajā'ib al-Asfār*', p. 145.

¹²¹ According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, during famine, the Sultan had ordered to dig up wells and cultivate lands in the suburbs of Delhi. Mawlānā 'Afif was imprisoned when he criticized it. However, later he was released, but after some time when the Sultan heard that he had again criticized him, he ordered the execution of the Mawlānā along with his two friends. Ibid., p. 150. Niẓāmī infers that the Mawlānā had criticized forced agricultural labour by the state. Idem, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 351.

¹²² Two Sindhi Mawlawīs were ordered by the Sultan to accompany a certain *amīr*, who was entrusted with some administrative responsibility. They were required to report the performance of the *amīr* to the Sultan. However, during conversation with them, the Sultan suspected dishonesty in their intentions. They were executed after they had confessed their dishonesty. But according to Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, they were forced to confess. Idem, '*Ajā'ib al-Asfār*', pp. 151-52.

¹²³ See details in *ibid.*, pp. 152-54.

¹²⁴ Shaykh Shams al-Dīn ibn Tāj al-'Ārifīn was a resident of Kō'il. When the Sultan visited the area, he summoned the Shaykh, but he refused to meet the Sultan. Then the Sultan went to his place to meet him, but he slipped away to avoid meeting with him. Later, when the Sultan came to know that the Shaykh had praised a rebel *amīr* by saying that he deserved to become king, the Shaykh was executed along with his sons at the Sultan's order. See details in *ibid.*, pp. 154-55, and 'Abd al-Ḥa'īyy, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, vol. II, pp. 79-80.

¹²⁵ For details, see Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, '*Ajā'ib al-Asfār*', pp. 155-56.

tortured to death at the orders of the Sultan.¹²⁶ According to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, when Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq adopted the title of ‘*ādil* (the just), and demanded from Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn to address him so, the Shaykh mocked it by saying that a tyrant (*ẓālim*) cannot be called a just king. For that reason, the Shaykh was executed at the Sultan’s order, and consequently, he came to be known as *Ḥaqq-gō* (the one who says the truth).¹²⁷

Here it seems pertinent to recall that during the previous regimes in the Sultanate, it was only during the times of Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Khaljī and Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī that the political authorities and the Sufis had come into direct conflict. During the reign of Sultan Fīrūz Khaljī, the execution of Saiyyidī Muwallih had sent shock waves in the Sufi circles, and it was a warning to them of the extent the state could go to; while during the times of Sultan Mubārak Khaljī, a serious friction had developed between the Sultan and the Chishtī leader, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, but before it could culminate in any repressive measures by the state against the Chishtīs, the Sultan was assassinated. However, it was under Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq that the state-Sufi relationship reached its lowest ebb, as the intensity of the conflict between the two camps had increased manifold.

¹²⁶ The *Khaṭīb al-Khuṭbā’* was placed in charge of a store of jewels during a journey. When some of the jewels were stolen from the store, the *Khaṭīb al-Khuṭbā’* was tortured to death. Ibid., p. 158.

¹²⁷ ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, p. 137, and Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 46-47. According to Ikrām, Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn *Ḥaqq-go* and Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Shaykh Aḥmad Jām (Shaykhzādah Jāmī) were the names of the same person. Idem, *Āb-i Kauthar*, pp. 463-64, whereas Māndavī and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq informs that the former was the son of Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Zāhidī. Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 46, and ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, p. 137.

As discussed earlier, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq had successfully maneuvered to make the Suhrawardī Shaykhs, particularly of Multan, beneficiaries of the Sultanate of Delhi, and hence, subservient to the state. The vacuum in the Suhrawardī leadership after the demise of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn ¹²⁸ provided an opportunity to the Sultan to take control of the entire Suhrawardī establishment at Multan, as differences erupted over the issue of spiritual succession. The differences and friction reached such an extent that the matter was referred to the Sultan, who eventually decided the case in favour of a grandson of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn named Shaykh Hūd. On his way to Multan from Dawlatabād, Shaykh Hūd stayed in Delhi for a while, where the Sultan cordially welcomed him and arranged a grand reception in his honour. Shaykh Hūd then proceeded to Multan, where he was declared the successor of his grandfather, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn, under the royal auspices. The *jāgīr* of his ancestors was also restored to him.¹²⁹ It is important to note that unlike the Chishtīs, the succession to spiritual affairs was hereditary among the Suhrawardīs,¹³⁰ and the spiritual successors, who were the descendants of the earlier Suhrawardī Shaykhs, came to be referred to as *sajjādah-nashīn*.

According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, after some time, the governor of Sindh, ‘Imād al-Mulk, reported to the Sultan that Shaykh Hūd and his relatives had amassed huge wealth, indulged in extravagance, and did not provide food to anyone in the *khānqāh*. The Sultan

¹²⁸ Since the Suhrawardī Sufī, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Faṭḥ of Multan, was issueless, therefore, after his demise a conflict erupted over succession. Ḥasan Bakhsh Shāh Qurayshī, *Anwār-i Ghauthiyyah* (Kōt Mīr Muḥammad Khān: privately published, 1985), p. 17.

¹²⁹ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *‘Ajā’ib al-Asfār*, pp. 152-53.

¹³⁰ Shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakarīyyā of Multan was succeeded by his son, Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn ‘Ārif, who was in turn succeeded by his son, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Faṭḥ of Multan (d. 1334/5). S. Moinul Haq, “The Suhrawardīs”, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXIII, part II (April 1975), pp. 78, 87.

ordered the confiscation of their property. 'Imād al-Mulk killed some of the family members of the *sajjādah-nashīn*, and also recovered the accumulated wealth. Meanwhile, Shaykh Hūd tried to flee to Turkistan, but was caught. He was brought to Delhi and presented before the Sultan, who ordered his execution.¹³¹ It was the first incident of its kind in the history of Muslim rule in India that a *sajjādah-nashīn* was executed by the political authorities. Shaykh Hūd was suspected by the Sultan of attempting to instigate a Mongol invasion of India.

At the beginning of his reign, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was a powerful and self-assured ruler. He was innovative, and initiated novel schemes, but when some of them proved to be a failure, the setbacks made him more aggressive and ruthless. His tolerance for criticism disappeared with every setback, and dealt severely with those who refused to comply with his orders. Many of the '*ulamā*' and the Sufis who bore the brunt of the Sultan's wrath were either sympathetic to the rebel leaders, or the Sultan was suspicious of their influence. Nevertheless, under him the state-Sufi relationship reached its lowest ebb. Those worst affected by the policies of the Sultan were the adherents of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, as their doctrines and traditions did not permit any association with the state or political authorities, an association that the Sultan desired. The next section deals with the relationship of the Sultan with the Chishtī Shaykhs.

¹³¹ While leveling charges against him, the Sultan said that he wanted to go to Turkistan in order to provoke people against the Sultan by pleading that a descendant of Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā of Multan had been maltreated by the Sultan of Delhi. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, '*Ajā'ib al-Asfār*', pp. 153-54.

Section II State's Encroachment on the Space of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, and its Defense by the Chishtīs

In pursuance of his religio-political ideals, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq tried to bring the eminent Chishtī Shaykhs under the umbrella of the state by appointing them on official positions or assigning them official tasks. The attempt of the Sultan was tantamount to encroachment on the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah*. The Chishtī Shaykhs responded to the challenge posed by the state, and tried to defend their space. The ensuing discussion focuses on the relationship of the Sultan with the Chishtī leadership as well as with the *khulafā'* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, who had been authorized to enroll disciples, and hence, carry on the task of propagation of the teachings and doctrines of the *Silsilah*.

5.4 Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and the Chishtī Leadership

After the demise of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', the leadership of the Chishtī *Silsilah* was passed on to Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd (d.1356), who was the principal spiritual successor of the former. Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd was titled *Chirāgh-i Dehlī*, meaning the lamp of Delhi.¹³² He was born in a well-to-do family in Awadh in 1276-77.¹³³ His father¹³⁴ was a trader in wool, who died when his son was only nine years

¹³² For a brief discussion on the different causal explanations for the title, see K. A. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli* (Delhi: Idārah-'i Adabiyāt-i Dellī, 1991), Appendix B, "Why Chiragh-i-Dehli?", p. 148. For a different explanation, see Hardēv, *Niẓāmī Bansarī*, pp. 215-16, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Ṣūfiyah*, p. 311.

¹³³ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 22.

¹³⁴ There are different views among the historians and hagiographers regarding the correct name of his father. For varied opinions, see *ibid.*, Appendix A, p. 147.

old.¹³⁵ After the demise of his father, his mother looked after the entire family. His teachers included Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Karīm Shērvānī, Qādī Muḥyi al-Dīn Kāshānī, Mawlānā Iftikhār al-Dīn Muḥammad Gilānī and Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā.¹³⁶ He came to Delhi during the reign of Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī at the age of forty-three, and entered the fold of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn’s discipleship.¹³⁷ Later, he was allotted a *hujrah* (a small room) inside the *jamā’atkhānah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn in Delhi. Tired of the hustle and bustle of the metropolitan capital, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn sought permission from his spiritual preceptor to retire to some lonely and remote quarter. Refusing to grant him the permission, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ ordered him to stay in Delhi and live among the people, suffer their oppressions, and repay them with munificence, benevolence and bounties.¹³⁸ It was in deference to this counsel of his preceptor that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn bore misfortune and troubles with patience and fortitude during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.

A few months before the demise of his preceptor, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn received *khilāfat* from Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn along with other disciples. However, in his last moments, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn bestowed upon him all the regalia which he had received from his preceptor, Bābā Farīd, which symbolized spiritual succession.¹³⁹ For the next thirty-two years of his life, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn lived in his own *jamā’atkhānah* in a place which came to be known as *Chirāgh-i Dehlī* in Delhi, as the head of the Chishtī

¹³⁵ Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 91.

¹³⁶ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u’-d-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, pp. 23-24.

¹³⁷ Qalandar, *Khair-u’-l-Majalis*, p. 282, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 91.

¹³⁸ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 237, and Qalandar, *Khair-u’-l-Majalis*, p. 46. See also Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 93, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, p. 302.

¹³⁹ These included the *khirqah* (patched robe), ‘*aṣā*’ (staff), *muṣallah* (prayer rug), *tasbīḥ* (rosary), and *kāsaḥ-i chaubīḥ* (wooden bowl). Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘Ārifīn*, p. 90.

Silsilah. This period of his life can be divided into two distinct phases: first stretching from 1325 to 1351, when Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq ruled the Sultanate; and the second one from 1351 to 1356, when he lived under the reign of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq. During these two phases, the policies of the state towards the Sufis were radically different, which impacted upon the relationship between the Chishtī Shaykhs and the Sultans of Delhi. Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn breathed his last in 1356, and was buried in his *jamā' atkhānah* in Delhi.

According to Nizami, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn himself did not write any book.¹⁴⁰ As for the *malḥūzāt*, his conversations have been compiled by Ḥamīd Qalandar with the title *Khayr al-Majālis*, which was regularly supervised by the Shaykh, who personally read and approved it.¹⁴¹ This *malḥūz* is considered to be a genuine compilation and 'the most authentic record' of the teachings of a Chishtī Sufi after *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*.¹⁴² Nevertheless, other works attributed to Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn include his *malḥūz*, titled *Miftāḥ al-'Āshiqīn*,¹⁴³ and a collection of letters called *Ṣaḥā'if al-Sulūk*.¹⁴⁴ These works are considered apocryphal, according to such historians as Habib¹⁴⁵ and Nizami.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 17.

¹⁴¹ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 28.

¹⁴² Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 18. See also Paul Jackson, "Khair Al-Majalis: An Examination," in *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries*, vol. II, *Religion and Religious Education*, ed. Christian W. Troll (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1985), pp. 34-57.

¹⁴³ Muḥibb Allāh, *Miftāḥ al-'Āshiqīn*, (*malḥūz* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd) (Delhi: Mujtabā'i Press, 1309 A.H.)

¹⁴⁴ Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, *Ṣaḥā'if al-Sulūk* (Jhajar: Muslim Press, n.d.)

¹⁴⁵ For a critical evaluation of *Miftāḥ al-'Āshiqīn*, see Habib, "Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period" in *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, p. 426.

¹⁴⁶ Nizami argues that *Miftāḥ al-'Āshiqīn* has derived its data from apocryphal *malḥūzāt* collections, and in all the ten *majālis*, almost the same audience appears. Similarly, Nizami also cites evidences to prove that *Ṣaḥā'if al-Sulūk* contains letters written by some *khalifah* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd to his disciples, and not by the Shaykh himself. For details see Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh*

As pointed out earlier, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn lived in Delhi for thirty-two years as the head of the Chishtī *Silsilah* after the demise of his preceptor. Despite heavy odds during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, he refused to serve the state, and thus, retained the independence of his *Silsilah* from the state and politics. Before discussing his relationship with the Sultan, it seems pertinent to briefly explore his views regarding political power.

5.4.1 Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn's Views regarding Political Power

Like his preceptor, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn also believed in dissociation from the government and politics of the state. He used to say that involvement with the government causes difficulties and worries.¹⁴⁷ He advised his disciples that they should never forget to watch over the health of their soul while engaged in government service.¹⁴⁸ Once the Shaykh said: “If a person gets some official position, even of a lower level, he tends to misuse his power and authority, and creates troubles for the people.”¹⁴⁹ It shows that the exercise of power by state officials, including those who were at the lower rungs of the administrative hierarchy in the Sultanate, was arbitrary and coercive. That is why, on a number of occasions, the Shaykh exhorted the people holding official positions to refrain from misusing and abusing power.¹⁵⁰

Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli, Appendix C, “Books and Brochures Ascribed to Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh”, pp. 149-51.

¹⁴⁷ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 104.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁵⁰ For instance, see *ibid.*, pp. 12-13, 206, 242.

The Shaykh identified and distinguished between two kinds of states: one that offered government posts as a means of service, while the other one founded on power, domination and the interests of the ruling elite. The former, according to the Shaykh, had only existed during the days of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and the Pious Caliphs. All succeeding political organizations of the Muslims fall in the second category. It was one of the prime duties of a Sufi to keep away from that kind of government.¹⁵¹ Like the Chishtī Shaykhs of the past, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn also had reservations regarding the judicial apparatus of the state. He exhorted the *qāḍīs* to act according to the principles of equity and justice, and treat the prince and the pauper alike.¹⁵²

Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn believed in maintaining distance from the court, and shunning the company of kings. He considered it degrading for a Sufi to visit the court of kings and ask for money from people.¹⁵³ An anecdote in *Khayr al-Majālis* reveals the attitude of the Shaykh in this regard: Once a king allowed the needy and the aggrieved to come to his court and submit their petitions. A *darvēsh* in tattered clothes also went there, but the attendant did not let him go. When the *darvēsh* asked him the reason, the attendant apologetically replied that the dress he was wearing was that of men of God. The attendant further said to him that the respect for his tattered dress prompted him (the attendant) to deter the *darvēsh* from going in the royal presence. The attendant then asked the *darvēsh* to change his dress, and come again in the dress of the people of the world.

¹⁵¹ Habib, "Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh-i-Dehli as a Great Historical Personality" in *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, p. 364.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

Only then, he said, he would allow him to go in the king's presence and submit his petition.¹⁵⁴

Khayr al-Majālis informs that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn had a high opinion of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī. In particular, the Shaykh praised the price control system during the reign of the Tughluq Sultans, particularly in the days of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq, when the prices of essential commodities had soared up. In a nostalgic mood, he used to recall the prosperity of the 'Alā'ī period.¹⁵⁵ Surprisingly, one comes across the use of words *raḥmat al-Allāh 'alayh* (May the blessings of God be on him) for Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn by the Shaykh,¹⁵⁶ which clearly shows that the Sultan commanded considerable respect in the eyes of the Shaykh. In fact, the policies of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn had benefited the people at large, and their advantages had trickled down to the poorest of the poor. It was for this reason that the policies of the Sultan were lauded by the Shaykh.

5.4.2 The Sultan's Meeting with Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn

Amīr Khūrd informs about a meeting of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq with some Chishtī Shaykhs including Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd in Delhi. According to his account, after ordering the Muslim populace of Delhi to migrate to Dawlatabād, the Sultan summoned Mawlānā Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī, Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd to his palace, in order to seek their cooperation in the conquest of Khurasan and Turkistan, and for overthrowing the Mongols. It seems from

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 272-73.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 88, 185 and 240. It is surprising to note that the name of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq does not occur in the entire *maḥfūz*.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 241.

the account that Mawlānā Fakhr al-Dīn went to the royal palace first, met the Sultan and dined with him, whereas the latter two Shaykhs saw the Sultan afterwards. When leaving, the Sultan presented the three Shaykhs pieces of woolen cloth and bags of silver coins, which they accepted. Mawlānā Fakhr al-Dīn's share was collected by one of his disciples present there, who was on the ushering duty in the palace.¹⁵⁷

It can be inferred that after forcing the majority of the Muslim populace of Delhi to migrate to Deccan, the Sultan was trying to build public opinion in favour of his military expeditions in Khurasan, for which he had recruited a huge army as well. That was why he granted an audience to the grandees and the 'ulamā' and Sufis, who were either left in Delhi or had migrated from neighbouring regions to Delhi. It was after addressing them in a public gathering that the three Chishtī Shaykhs were summoned by the Sultan in his palace, where he tried to seek their support for his plans for military expansion. Moreover, here it seems pertinent to compare the views of the Sultan and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd regarding the Mongol problem. Under the influence of Ibn Taymiyyah, the Sultan had planned to wage *jihād* against the Mongols, while in his *malfūz*, *Khayr al-Majālis*, the Shaykh is recorded to have narrated the details of how a

¹⁵⁷ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 271-73, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 319-20. One can infer from Amīr Khūrd's account that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn preferred to remain silent during the meeting, but according to Jamālī, the conversation took place between the Sultan and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn instead of Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn. Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 94-95. However, Amīr Khūrd's account seems to be more authentic for two reasons: first, Jamālī's *Siyar al-'Ārifīn* is a later source, whereas Amīr Khūrd is a contemporary source; and secondly, Jamālī acknowledges that he had borrowed the account from Amīr Khūrd, and thus, the account of the former is incorrect. Both Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Habib have mistakenly accepted the version of Jamālī instead of Amīr Khūrd. See 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Ṣūfiyah*, pp. 318-20, and Habib, "Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh-i-Dehli as a Great Historical Personality" in *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, pp. 369-70. Nevertheless, Nizami and Riazul Islam have given credence to Amīr Khūrd's account, which seems more valid. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 69, also see n.15, and Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 253.

Mongol leader named Kharbandah had converted to Islam at the hands of Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī.¹⁵⁸ The account clearly shows the difference of approach between the Sufis and the Sultans, since the former believed in winning over the hearts of people through love and force of character, while the latter believed in the use of force and coercion for achieving similar ends.

One can also infer from Amīr Khūrd's account that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn kept a low profile at the meeting. It can also be inferred that the Shaykh accepted the robe and cash offering in order to avoid any punishment from the short-tempered Sultan for disobedience. The account expressly mentions that the Sultan was looking for an excuse to punish the Chishtī Shaykhs, particularly Mawlānā Fakhr al-Dīn, on one pretext or the other. Moreover, the Chishtī traditions allowed the acceptance of cash grants from the kings, as Bābā Farīd had also accepted such as an offering from Ulugh Khān Balban, after meeting with him. Till that time, the relationship between Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn did not seem to have been strained, but later it deteriorated to a greater extent.

5.4.3 The Sultan and the Shaykh: Relationship under Strains

The relationship between Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd witnessed stresses and strains. According to Amīr Khūrd, the Sultan harassed the Shaykh, but he bore all the miseries with patience, in pursuance of his preceptors' traditions, and never tried to take revenge.¹⁵⁹ However, Amīr Khūrd has not given any

¹⁵⁸ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, pp. 150-51.

¹⁵⁹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 245-46.

detail of these 'misereries.' Similarly, Muḥammad Ghauthī Shattārī informs that the Sultan created troubles for the Shaykh, but he also fails to mention the details and causes of these troubles.¹⁶⁰ Based on their presumptions, the latter-day historians have expressed different opinions about it. Nizami argues, for instance, that it was in all probability, owing to the Shaykh's refusal to go to Dawlatabād for the propagation of Islam that the Sultan was annoyed. That was why the Sultan started harassing the Shaykh.¹⁶¹ However, according to Riazul Islam, there is no evidence that the Shaykh was ever ordered by the Sultan to migrate to Dawlatabād.¹⁶² As discussed above, the meeting between the Sultan and the Shaykh, along with two other Chishtī Shaykhs, took place after the Sultan had ordered the Muslim populace of Delhi to migrate to Dawlatabād. The presence of Mawlānā Zarrādī in Delhi shows that he had not been ordered to proceed to Dawlatabād till that time. Moreover, during the conversation between the Sultan and the Mawlānā, the former did not order the latter to leave Delhi. The Mawlānā might have been ordered to move later. Similarly, if Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn had been asked by the Sultan to go to Dawlatabād before their meeting took place, and the Shaykh had refused to comply with the order, it was difficult for the Shaykh to visit the royal palace. It can be inferred that by that time, the Shaykh had not been ordered by the Sultan to go to Dawlatabād. Later, when Mawlānā Zarrādī was ordered to leave Delhi, the Shaykh might have also been ordered to do so, but there is no historical evidence for it. If we assume that the Shaykh had refused to comply with the royal order and resisted going to Dawlatabād, the contemporary historians must not have omitted recording it. Thus, the hunch of Nizami regarding the Shaykh's refusal to go to Dawlatabād does not seem well-founded. The

¹⁶⁰ Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 115.

¹⁶¹ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 71.

¹⁶² Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 253.

actual reason for the deterioration of the relationship between the Sultan and the Shaykh needs to be sought elsewhere.

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's policy of drawing the 'ulamā' and Sufis into public affairs stood in sharp contrast to the Chishtī ideals and traditions. He had assigned token duties to some of the eminent Sufi Shaykhs as well. Whether he assigned any official duty to Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd is a controversial question among the historians. Contemporary or near contemporary sources have failed to mention any such thing. For instance, Amīr Khūrd, who mentions at various places in his hagiographical account that nine Sufis were assigned duties by the Sultan, does not indicate that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was among them.¹⁶³ However, latter day historians and hagiographers have fabricated stories regarding it: Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, Farishtah and Ghulām Mu'īn al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh Khayshgī (d. 1695) inform that Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq had appointed the Shaykh as his *jāmahdār* (robe bearer, or the one who dresses the Sultan).¹⁶⁴ Though these accounts have been uncritically accepted by some historians, such as Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn,¹⁶⁵ S. M. Ikram,¹⁶⁶ Rizvi¹⁶⁷ and Aslam,¹⁶⁸ these have been rejected by scholars

¹⁶³ Nizami, Introduction to *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 55, n.5.

¹⁶⁴ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, p. 87, and Ghulām Mu'īn al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh Khayshgī, *Ma'ārij al-Walāyah*, MS, Central Library, University of the Punjab, f. 50a, and Muḥammad Abū 'l-Qasim Hindu Shāh Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, 2 vols. bound together (Lucknow: Newal Kishore, 1281 A.H./1864 A.D.), vol. II, p. 399. It is important to note that the Urdu translation of *Tārīkh-i Farishtah* by Fidā 'Alī Ṭālib, which has been consulted earlier, does not include the section on the eminent Sufi Shaykhs of India.

¹⁶⁵ 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Ṣūfiyah*, p. 322. The author expresses his surprise while citing Farishtah, and observes that the work contains some odd things, which have not been mentioned in other sources, but he does not clearly reject the account.

¹⁶⁶ Ikram, *Āb-i Kauthar*, p. 462.

¹⁶⁷ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 185.

¹⁶⁸ Aslam, *Malfūzātī Adab kī Tārīkhī Ahammiyyat*, p. 91.

including Habib,¹⁶⁹ Nizami¹⁷⁰ and Riazul Islam,¹⁷¹ since no contemporary or near contemporary source mentions such a thing. It seems probable that if the Shaykh had been assigned any such official task, Amīr Khūrd or Baranī would have recorded it.

Though the above-mentioned later day historical sources record that the relationship between the Sultan and the Shaykh had strained, they all fail to provide any plausible explanation for it. However, it is not very difficult to understand it in the backdrop of the general policy and attitude of the Sultan towards the Sufis. The *malfūz* of the Shaykh's *khalīfah*, Saiyyid Bandahnawāz Gēsūdīrāz, titled *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, cites some instances which reveal that the Sultan wanted to persecute the Shaykh on some pretext. It records that the Sultan once sent some food to the Shaykh in gold and silver utensils, the use of which is forbidden in Islamic law. The possibility of the Sultan's lack of knowledge about it can easily be ruled out keeping in view that he was well-versed in *fiqh*. However, the Shaykh put some curry from the utensils on a piece of bread and tasted it.¹⁷² It shows that the Shaykh did not refuse to eat altogether, as it might give the Sultan a chance to punish the Shaykh for disobedience. It betrays that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn did not want to give any chance or any excuse to the Sultan for punishment or persecution, and thus, tried to preempt any open hostility or confrontation with the latter.

¹⁶⁹ Habib, "Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh-i-Dehli as a Great Historical Personality" in *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, vol. 1, p. 371.

¹⁷⁰ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 72.

¹⁷¹ Riazul Islam argues that the mention of Shaykh being appointed as a *jāmahdār* of the Sultan appears in *Akhhār al-Akhyār* for the first time, which was completed in the last decade of the 16th century, that is, more than 250 years after the event. Idem, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 254.

¹⁷² Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 333; see also 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, p. 87.

Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim further informs that the Shaykh was forced by the Sultan to take eighty *tankahs* daily from the state treasury as a stipend. The Shaykh accepted this but never spent it on himself or on the *langar* of his *jamā‘ atkhānah*.¹⁷³ He must have distributed it in charity. It is important to recall that the income from the state was considered unlawful by some of the Sufīs, as it was extracted from unlawful taxes and through oppression and tyranny by the revenue collectors. Again the Shaykh must have accepted the stipend under duress, as any denial on his part to accept it might incur the displeasure of the Sultan. The efforts of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn to avoid any clash with the Sultan notwithstanding, the relationship between them deteriorated to such an extent, that the former had to suffer severe punishment at the hands of the latter. But Amīr Khūrd and Baranī are silent about it. Gēsūdirāz has merely alluded to many cruelties Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was subjected to by the Sultan, but he has failed to give their detail. *Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim* also records that when Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb (d. 1340)¹⁷⁴ was apprised of the maltreatment of the Shaykh by the Sultan, he became very upset.¹⁷⁵ He also wrote a letter to Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn to console him.¹⁷⁶

The reason for the silence of the contemporary or near contemporary sources regarding the causes and nature of the punishment to the Shaykh is understandable given the fact that the Shaykh never complained or uttered a single word about it. He patiently

¹⁷³ Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim*, p. 106.

¹⁷⁴ For a brief life sketch and teachings, see ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Šūfiyah*, pp. 272-93.

¹⁷⁵ Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn is said to have wept bitterly when he heard about it. He also said: “Khāwand Mawlānā Maḥmūd is very kind-hearted and forgiving. If he desires, he earth would swallow him (the Sultan), his whole army, people, horses and elephants and would not belch.” *Ibid.*, p. 240.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 420.

bore all the miseries and hardships.¹⁷⁷ Once asked about the treatment he received from the Sultan, he replied: "It was a matter between me and God. He settled it this way."¹⁷⁸ However, some of the later day historians and hagiographers have fabricated stories regarding the treatment of the Shaykh by the Sultan. These include 'Abd al-Wāhid Bilgrāmī¹⁷⁹ and Farishtah.¹⁸⁰ Historians like 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī¹⁸¹ and Muḥammad Būlāq Chishtī (d. after 1699 circa) have rejected the accounts of Bilgrāmī and Farishtah as "bazaar gossip."¹⁸² Nonetheless, regarding the alleged maltreatment of the Shaykh by the Sultan, Riazul Islam is of the opinion that it is by no means unlikely for the Shaykh to have been maltreated by the Sultan, as the latter had a "streak of savage cruelty in his temperament."¹⁸³

Towards the close of his reign, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq summoned many 'ulamā', Sufis and *umarā'* to Gōndal (near Kāthiāwār), where he had encamped with the

¹⁷⁷ Muḥammad Biḥāmid Khāni, *Tārīkh-i Muḥammadi*, MS, Rotograph of Manuscript in British Museum, London, f. 149b, as cited in Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 71.

¹⁷⁸ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 246.

¹⁷⁹ Bilgrāmī informs that the Shaykh was persecuted by the Sultan, who had ordered holes to be made in the collar bone of the Shaykh and made him hang from some height. At last, the Shaykh submitted and accepted the duty of clothing the Sultan. Idem, *Saba' Sanābil*, pp. 153-54. It seems most unlikely that the Shaykh had submitted before the Sultan when he was tortured. Given the forbearance and courage of the Shaykh, he would have preferred death to submission before the political authorities.

¹⁸⁰ Farishtah writes that when the Shaykh refused to accept the duty of clothing the Sultan, he gave a blow on the nape of the Shaykh and imprisoned him. After three months, the Shaykh reflected that in such cases, his spiritual ancestors had submitted before the political authorities. Therefore, the Shaykh accepted the service, and was consequently, released from the prison. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Newal Kishore ed.), vol. II, p. 399. Again, it seems most unlikely that the Shaykh had surrendered before the political authorities under duress, and accepted some official duty, compromising the Chishtī traditions and ideals. Moreover, there is no instance of any of his spiritual ancestors to have submitted before the kings in such a case.

¹⁸¹ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, p. 303.

¹⁸² Muḥammad Būlāq Chishtī, *Maṭlūb al-Ṭālibīn*, MS, Personal Collection of K. A. Nizami, (comp. in 1111 A.H./1699 A.D.), as cited in Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 72.

¹⁸³ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, pp. 254-55.

imperial forces, while pursuing a rebel leader Malik Ṭaghī. Baranī mentions the presence of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd in the royal camp near Thattah, when the Sultan breathed his last.¹⁸⁴ Amīr Khūrd records that the Sultan did not pay respect to the Shaykh which was due to him.¹⁸⁵ It seems that the Shaykh was either forcibly taken there, or he had complied with the orders of the Sultan under duress. In fact, being the principal successor of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, he was more conscious of the Chishtī traditions in general, and the teachings of his spiritual preceptor, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, in particular.

In this way, there was an attempt at encroachment on the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* during the reign of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, and in response to it, not only the Chishtī leadership tried to defend it while adhering to the Chishtī tradition of detachment from political authorities, the eminent *khulafā'* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', also did their best to defend and preserve the space of their *Silsilah*.

5.5 Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Other Notable Chishtī-Niẓāmī Shaykhs¹⁸⁶

Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's teachings went a long way in affecting the behaviour of his *khulafā'*, who carried on the traditions and teachings of the *Silsilah* wherever they went. The 'spiritual descendants' of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' came to be known as Chishtī-Niẓāmī. As pointed out earlier, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq wanted to seek the assistance of the Sufis and '*ulamā'* in *jihād* against the Mongols, propagation of Islam, and in administrative and political matters. Therefore, the Chishtī Shaykhs were

¹⁸⁴ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 535.

¹⁸⁵ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 246.

¹⁸⁶ One of the main branches or sub-lineages of Chishtī *Silsilah* is the Chishtī-Niẓāmī branch, named after Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', which includes his disciples and *khalīfahs*, and their subsequent spiritual descendants.

forced to accept official positions, which was contrary to the Chishtī ideals. The ensuing discussion brings to the forefront how the state policies under Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq affected some of the eminent Chishtī Shaykhs, who were the *khulafā'* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, and how they responded to these policies.

5.5.1 Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī

Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī (d. 1358/9) was an eminent *khalīfah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn and a descendant of Shaykh Jamal al-Dīn of Hānsī, a *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd.¹⁸⁷ He preferred to live in remote town of Hānsī in the Punjab, as the hustle and bustle of city life did not suit his temperament. Amīr Khūrd writes in *Siyar al-Awliyā'* that Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's ears had been poisoned against the Shaykh by those who were envious of him. Therefore, the Sultan looked for an opportunity to punish the Shaykh on some pretext. In order to test the piety and austerity of the Shaykh, the Sultan sent him a grant of two villages through Qāḍī Kamāl al-Dīn, the *Ṣadr-i Jahān*. While refusing to accept it, the Shaykh recalled and narrated the story of a similar offer from Ulugh Khān Balban to Bābā Farīd, which the latter had turned down. Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn also exhorted the Qāḍī to prevent people from giving up the traditions of their spiritual preceptors. Impressed by the attitude of the Shaykh, the Qāḍī reported the same to the Sultan, whose opinion of the Shaykh changed after this.¹⁸⁸ It seems from this incident that the real intent of the Sultan was to test the Shaykh rather than presenting the grant as a token of devotion.

¹⁸⁷ For a brief biographical note, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 247-56, and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, pp. 93-95.

¹⁸⁸ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 250-51; see also 'Abd al-Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, p. 311.

Once during his visit to the Punjab, the Sultan had encamped in Bansī near Hānsī. He summoned Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn to the royal camp. Reluctantly, the Shaykh reached there, but the Sultan had left for Delhi, and had left orders that the Shaykh should follow him and meet him in Delhi. However, when the Sultan finally met the Shaykh, the former was once again convinced of the piety and spirituality of the latter. It is interesting to note that during their conversation, when the Sultan complained about the Shaykh's indifference towards the political authorities, the latter repeated the words of his preceptor, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, to Crown Prince Khiḍr Khān, who had carried a letter from Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī: "I'm a recluse, retired to a corner, and busy in praying for the Sultan and the Muslims. You should excuse me for it"¹⁸⁹ It was a tactful reply from Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn to Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, in order to preempt any displeasure or anger on the part of the latter. In the opinion of Riazul Islam, the Shaykh did well in the test, as he neither antagonized the Sultan, nor did he demean himself in order to placate the Sultan.¹⁹⁰

Amīr Khūrd's account clearly mentions that while the Shaykh was still in Delhi, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq sent Fīrūz Tughluq, his *nā'ib bārbak* (deputy chamberlain and master of ceremonies), and Diyā' al-Dīn Baranī to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, and offered him cash *futūḥ* of one hundred thousand *tankahs*. When the Shaykh refused to accept it, Fīrūz and Baranī returned and reported everything to the Sultan. The Sultan again sent them to the Shaykh, and this time offered him fifty-thousand *tankahs*. Again

¹⁸⁹ For details, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 252-54. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī narrates the similar incident on the authority of Amīr Khūrd in *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 311-12.

¹⁹⁰ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 261.

the Shaykh rejected them. Then the Sultan asked the Shaykh to accept at least two thousand *tankahs*. Fīrūz and Baranī earnestly requested the Shaykh to accept it, as it was difficult for both of them to inform the Sultan about the refusal of the Shaykh to accept the royal grant. The Shaykh accepted it unwillingly, and distributed it among the people. The Shaykh returned to Hānsī after this.¹⁹¹ He appears to have accepted the grant in order to save the two, Fīrūz and Baranī, from embarrassment and the displeasure of the Sultan.

5.5.2 Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā

Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā, a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn and the teacher of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, was a renowned scholar of his times. He was ordered by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq to proceed to Kashmir for the propagation of Islam. Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn had no choice but to comply with the royal orders. However, when he was about to leave for Kashmir, he developed a blister on his chest. Unable to travel, he presented his excuse, but the Sultan summoned him to the court and after verifying that his illness was genuine, allowed him to stay in Delhi. After a few days, Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn expired.¹⁹²

5.5.3 Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī

Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī, another *khalīfah* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, was also a notable scholar of his times. As discussed above, Shaykh Zarrādī, along with Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd and Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā, were summoned by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. The details of the meeting reveal that the attitude of Shaykh

¹⁹¹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 254-55.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 228.

Zarrādī antagonized the Sultan, who wanted to punish and persecute him on one pretext or the other, but he could not do so.¹⁹³ The meeting ended on a bitter note. Complying with the order of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, Shaykh Zarrādī later migrated to Dawlatabād, but soon started making preparations for proceeding to Makkah for pilgrimage. When Kamāl al-Dīn, the *Ṣadr-i Jahān* as well as the *Qāḍī* of Dawlatabād, came to know about the Shaykh's plan, he warned him against leaving Dawlatabād without the Sultan's permission. Turning a deaf ear to the *qāḍī*'s warning, Shaykh Zarrādī left for Makkah.¹⁹⁴ In this way, he escaped any further official directive and any possible conflict with the Sultan.

5.5.4 Shaykh Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān

Another eminent *khalīfah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn was Shaykh Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān (d. 1356/7), who was popularly known as *Akhī* Sirāj (meaning brother Sirāj).¹⁹⁵ He escaped to Lakhnautī (Bengal) when the *umarā'*, '*ulamā'* and Sufis of Delhi were forced to go to Dawlatabād by the Sultan.¹⁹⁶ The Chishtī Shaykhs tried to evade the official directives but at the same time tried to avoid conflict with the political authorities or the state. Nonetheless, the spiritual successors or *khulafā'* of Shaykh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān could not follow the Chishtī policy of detachment from state and politics in Bengal. His most renowned *khalīfah*, Shaykh 'Alā' al-Ḥaqq As'ad of Bengal, who lived in Pandūah,

¹⁹³ For details, see *ibid.*, pp. 271-73.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

¹⁹⁵ For a brief biographical note, see *ibid.*, pp. 288-90. See also M. Abdullah Chaghatai, "Shaykh Akhi Siraj al-Dīn 'Uthmān, a Bengali Saint", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. IX, part I (January 1961), pp. 23-29.

¹⁹⁶ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 289. Muḥammad Būlāq Chishtī, *Maṭlūb al-Ṭālibīn*, MS, as cited in Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, p. 114. Shaykh Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān was the spiritual mentor of the author of *Maṭlūb al-Ṭālibīn*.

and his son and *khalifah*, Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam, enjoyed friendly relations with the independent rulers of Bengal, Sultan Sikandar Shāh and Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn A‘ẓam Shāh. Similarly, Shaykh Ashraf Jahāngīr (d. 1425), the *khalifah* of Shaykh Nūr Quṭb ‘Ālam, who lived in eastern Uttar Pradesh, also participated in political affairs.¹⁹⁷

5.5.5 Shaykh Ḥussām al-Dīn of Multan

Shaykh Ḥussām al-Dīn of Multan was another *khalifah* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn.¹⁹⁸ When Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq ordered the Muslim population of Delhi to move to Dawlatabād, Shaykh Ḥussām al-Dīn went to Gujrat, where he lived till his death.¹⁹⁹ The Shaykh might have feared that he would be given an official assignment by the Sultan in Deccan.

5.5.6 Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb

Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb of Deccan (d. 1340) was another prominent *khalifah* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn. He was ordered by his preceptor to proceed to Deccan for propagation of Islam and spiritual guidance of the Muslims.²⁰⁰ He proceeded to Dawlatabād shortly after the demise of his preceptor.²⁰¹ He is said to be the first Chishtī Shaykh who settled in Deccan.²⁰² The city of Burhānpur, the capital of the Kingdom of Khāndēsh, which was built by Sultan Nāṣir Khān Fārūqī (r. 1399-1437), the King of

¹⁹⁷ See details in Md. Gholam Rasool, *Chishti-Nizami Sufi Order of Bengal (till Mid-15th Century) and its Socio-religious Contribution* (Delhi: Idārah-’i Adabiyāt-i Dellī, 1990), pp. 145-46.

¹⁹⁸ For a brief biographical note, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 256-62.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 262, and Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, pp. 102-03.

²⁰⁰ The Shaykh proceeded to Deccan along with seven hundred disciples of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn including Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī, Shaykh Kamāl Khujandī, Shaykh Jām and Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn. ‘Abd al-Rahmān, *Bazm-i Šūfiyah*, p. 276.

²⁰¹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 282.

²⁰² Niẓāmī, *Tārīkh-i Mashā’ikh-i Chisht*, p. 260.

Khāndēsh, was named after him.²⁰³ Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn lived in Dawlatabād for twenty-eight or twenty-nine years, and was buried in Khuldābād.

During his stay in Delhi before proceeding to Deccan, Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn remained aloof from the court and politics. Once Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq set out to see him. On hearing his impending arrival, the Shaykh prayed to God to prevent the meeting from taking place. The royal entourage returned half way. On another occasion, the Sultan sent him a cash grant of three thousand *tankahs*, but he declined the grant. The Sultan again sent a messenger to the Shaykh, saying that the grant was meant for the attendants of the Shaykh. The Shaykh accepted it, but called his *khādim-i khāṣṣ* (personal attendant) and asked him to bring all the money he had. The *khādim-i khāṣṣ* presented twenty *tankahs*. The Shaykh asked to mix these coins with the royal grant, and distribute it among the poor.²⁰⁴ It shows that Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn adhered to the Chishtī ideals very strictly.

Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn used to instruct the rulers and political authorities to care for the welfare of the people, but his method of instruction was indirect. An anecdote narrated by the Shaykh himself illustrates this. According to him, the ruler of a certain country had ordered to procure grain from merchants at high rates in order to sell it on low price. One day the treasurer informed the ruler that the treasury had become empty. The ruler replied: "Do not worry. Though the treasury has been emptied of gold and

²⁰³ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 183.

²⁰⁴ Ghulām 'Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī, *Rawḍat al-Awliyā'*, pp. 27, 44, as cited in 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bazm-i Ṣūfiyah*, pp. 283-84.

silver, it has become full of blessings.”²⁰⁵ It can be inferred that in an implicit manner, the Shaykh used to urge the state officials to take care of the subjects. This particular anecdote also betrays the recession in the economy of the Sultanate, resulting in the rising cost of essential commodities, which is corroborated by the statements of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn in *Khayr al-Majālis*.²⁰⁶

5.5.7 Mawlānā Muḥammad Shihāb al-Dīn Imām

Mawlānā Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad Imām (d. 1335) was a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, who used to lead the prayers in his preceptor’s *jamā’ atkhānah*, which had earned him the title of *Imām*.²⁰⁷ According to Amīr Khūrd and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, after the demise of his preceptor, he also proceeded to Dawlatabād like Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn, where he enrolled disciples and disseminated the teachings of the Chishtī *Silsilah*. However, he returned to Delhi after some time, and died there.²⁰⁸ It can be inferred that the Mawlānā had proceeded to Dawlatabād on his own initiative, and he had neither been deputed by his preceptor to do so, nor ordered by the Sultan.

Delhi was the centre of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in northern India. However, during his lifetime, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn had deputed Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb to spread the teachings of the *Silsilah* to the Deccan in the south. It shows that Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn was conscious of the fact that the south, where the rate of conversion to Islam was quite

²⁰⁵ Ḥammād ibn ‘Imād Kāshānī, *Nafā’is al-Anfās*, (*malḥūz* of Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb), MS, Library of *Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’*, Lucknow, no. 333, p. 156, as quoted in Aslam, *Malḥūzātī Adab kī Tārīkhī Ahammiyyat*, p. 185.

²⁰⁶ Qalandar, *Khair-u’l-Majālis*, pp. 88, 185 and 240.

²⁰⁷ For a brief biographical note, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 290-92.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 291-92, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, p. 329.

low, needed propagation of Islam among the non-Muslims, as well as dissemination of the teachings of Sufism. The same need might have been felt by his *khulafā'* like Mawlānā Shihāb al-Dīn Imām, who followed in the footsteps of Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn, and they both popularized the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Deccan as well as propagated Islam there.

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was motivated by political as well as similar religious considerations, when he ordered the '*ulamā'*' as well as the Sufis, along with other influential Muslim families of Delhi, to move to Deccan and settle in Dawlatabād. Apparently, Ishwari Prasad's remarks that the Sultan had no aversion for the '*ulamā'*',²⁰⁹ and Trimmingham's observation that the Sultan was not opposed to Sufis as such,²¹⁰ seem to be partially correct, and it appears that the Sultan did not harbour any personal grudge against either of these two groups. Nonetheless, the Sultan seems to have become intolerant towards some of them, as indicated by the brutal punishments he inflicted on them. Leaving aside these few individuals, the Chishtī Shaykhs were the worst affected by the policies of the regime, because the policy of employing the '*ulamā'*' and the Sufis in government service stood in sharp contrast to the Chishtī ideals and principles. Similarly, the mass exodus from Delhi had particularly adverse repercussions for the Sufi institutions and the *khānqāh* life in Delhi. Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn is reported to have said in Sultan Fīrūz's reign: "In these days, the keepers of *langars* or free kitchen are no more to be found, nor those people (who used to be there before). Everything has been

²⁰⁹ Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, p. 319.

²¹⁰ Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 23, n.1.

destroyed.”²¹¹ He continued that in the days of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, there were a large number of devotees and disciples, in these days, to whom can one complain for all this?”²¹² Gēsūdīrāz also informs that Delhi had a number of mausoleums, but after Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq’s so-called ‘destruction of Delhi’, they were completely destroyed, except for the mausoleums of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn.²¹³ Although the policies of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq had adversely affected many Sufī *silsilahs*, its impact was most devastating for the Chishtī *Silsilah*, as it’s headquarter was Delhi.

In theory, the Deccan policy gave a death blow to the concept of *wilāyat* or *wilāyah* (spiritual domain), according to which various geographical territories were under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Sufī Shaykhs belonging to different *silsilahs*.²¹⁴ In practical terms, the state policy towards the Chishtī Shaykhs dispersed the disciples and *khulafā’* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, which adversely affected the organization of the *Silsilah* in Delhi. Though the so-called decline of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in Delhi coincided with the emergence of local/provincial Chishtī *khānqāhs* in Bengal, Deccan, Gujrat and Mālwah,²¹⁵ and the subsequent proliferation of the teachings of the *Silsilah* in these regions, this so-called ‘decentralization’ of the *Silsilah* fragmented the centrally compact organization of the Chishtīs in Delhi. Nizami argues that the provincial *khānqāhs*, which

²¹¹ Qalandar, *Khair-u’l-Majalis*, p. 240.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Husaynī, *Jawāmi’ al-Kalim*, p. 143.

²¹⁴ For a brief discussion on the concept of *wilāyat* or *wilāyah* in Sufism, see chap. 1, pp. 108-9, see also note 136-38 (supra).

²¹⁵ For a detailed study of the establishment of Chishtī *khānqāhs* in these four regions, see Niẓāmī, *Tārikh-i Mashā’ikh-i Chisht*, pp. 252-68.

sprang up all over the country, were not connected with any central *khānqāh*.²¹⁶ In the absence of a centre, which could control the entire network of provincial *khānqāhs* of the Chishtīs, the entire Chishtiyyah organization was dismembered.

In the opinion of S. M. Ikrām, the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq heralded the decline of the golden era of the Sufis in India.²¹⁷ Similarly, Nizami also concludes that the policy of the Sultan was to a large extent responsible for the dissolution of the Chishtī and Suhrawardī *Silsilahs*, and the destruction of *khānqāh* life and organization.²¹⁸ Regarding the impact of the policies of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq on the Chishtīs, Nizami argues that if the Sultan had not forced the Sufis to come out of their *khānqāhs* and take part in public life, the ‘decline of the first cycle of Chishtī *Silsilah*’ would not have taken place so early.²¹⁹ Nizami’s analysis seems to be marred by a deterministic approach implying that the decline of the Chishtī *Silsilah* was a foregone conclusion. Ernst and Lawrence have not only challenged the notion of the golden age and decline of Sufism in general, but have also questioned the idea of the decline of the Chishtī *Silsilah*. They have attempted to periodize the history of the Chishtīs by proposing five divisions, which are “not defined in terms of greatness and decline but in terms of their faithfulness to Chishtī values and norms.”²²⁰

²¹⁶ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u’-d-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 53, and idem, *Tārīkh-i Mashā’ikh-i Chisht*, pp. 247, 251, 252.

²¹⁷ Ikrām, *Āb-i Kauthar*, p. 461.

²¹⁸ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u’-d-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 14, and Idem, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, p. 96. As for the Suhrawardīs, the prevailing conditions in their *Silsilah*, particularly regarding the tussles on spiritual succession, provided an opportunity to the state to interfere in their functioning.

²¹⁹ Nizāmī, *Salāḥin-i Dehli kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 360.

²²⁰ Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 13; for a detailed discussion, see pp. 11-13, and for the five divisions in the history of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, see p. 14.

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq fell seriously ill while pursuing a rebel leader named Malik Ṭaghī, who had sought shelter with the Sumarā ruler, the Jām of Ṭhattah. The Sultan breathed his last near Ṭhattah in 1351. He was succeeded by Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq, who reversed many of the policies of his predecessor, including those towards the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis. Thus, with the accession of Sultan Fīrūz, a new chapter began in the history of the state-Sufi relationship. The relationship between the state under the new Sultan and the Chishtī *Silsilah* is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Preservation and Negotiation of the Space of the *Silsilah* (1351-1398)

The thirty-seven year long reign of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq witnessed the reversal of many of the policies of his predecessor, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, in the Sultanate of Delhi. The measures undertaken by Sultan Fīrūz seem to be an attempt to make up for the adverse effects of the policies of the previous regime. He made attempts to revive the Sufi institutions, and adopted a two-pronged strategy of conciliation and containment of the Sufis, as his policy towards the Sufis was informed by quite diverse influences. In the changed political climate, the Chishtī Shaykhs tried to preserve the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Sultanate of Delhi. However, the descendants of some of the Chishtī Shaykhs tried to negotiate the space with the state by readjusting and/or redefining the limits of the independent space of the *Silsilah*.

The present chapter examines the policy of Sultan Fīrūz towards the Sufis, with a particular focus on the Chishtīs. While doing so, it tries to explore the diverse and conflicting influences on the Sultan, which informed the state policy towards the Sufis, as well as analyze the features of the policy. It investigates the varied responses offered by the Chishtīs, including the Chishtī Shaykhs and their descendants, to the challenges posed by the state. It also deals with the concept and practice of *sajjādah-nashīnī* (hereditary

succession for the custodianship of a Sufi shrine) in the Chishtī circles, while discussing the repercussions of the state policy for the Chishtī *Silsilah* and its adherents.

This chapter, which is also the last chapter of the study, is divided into four sections: the first section deals with the policy of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq towards the Sufis in general; the second section analyzes the relationship of the Sultan with the Chishtī Shaykhs, with a particular focus on the Chishtī leadership under Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd; the third section explores the attitude of the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs towards the state and political power, and examines how some of them negotiated the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* with the state; whereas the last section examines the relationship of the Chishtī leadership under Khwājah Gēsūdirāz with the state. Since the Khwājah had migrated from Delhi Sultanate, and settled in the Bahmanī Kingdom in Deccan in 1398-99, it briefly highlights the relationship between the Bahmanī Sultans and the Khwājah.

Section I Policy of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq towards the Sufis

Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī, a lengthy inscription providing an official version of the regulations and achievements of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq, informs that the Sultan tried to compensate the families of the people, who had been punished by the late Sultan, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, by giving them land and cash grants. In lieu of these favours, they were required to endorse documents stating that they had pardoned the late Sultan. These documents, which were also attested by witnesses, were then put near the grave of

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.¹ It clearly shows that the new Sultan was very conscious of the wrong done by the policies of the previous regime, and tried to counterbalance those policies. This was also evident from his policy towards the Sufis, as he tried to conciliate them and revive the Sufi institutions, but at the same time, he also adopted a policy of containment of the Sufis. Before we proceed to analyze this two-pronged policy of Sultan Fīrūz towards the Sufis, it seems pertinent to explore its determinants.

6.1 Determinants of the Sultan's Policy towards the Sufis

The policy of Sultan Fīrūz towards the Sufis was influenced by a host of factors including the role of the Sufis and 'ulamā' in his accession to the throne, his religious orientation and personal disposition, and the contemporary religio-intellectual environment, which are discussed below:

6.1.1 Role of the Sufis and 'Ulamā' in Sultan Fīrūz's Accession

In his last days, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq had needlessly summoned a large number of *umarā'* and high state officials along with their families, as well as some of the 'ulamā' and the Sufis from Delhi to Gōndal (Kāthiāwār), where he had encamped during a military expedition. However, when the royal entourage reached near Thatta, the Sultan fell ill and died.² At that time, there were two hundred thousand people, including women and children, present in the camp.³ The sudden death of the Sultan left the entire camp and the army without a leader, which was thrown into confusion. There was already

¹ Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, ed. Shaikh 'Abd al-Rashid (Aligarh: Department of History, Muslim University, 1954), p. 16. See also Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 62.

² Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 523-25.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 536.

a crisis situation owing to widespread discontent against the regime, articulated in the form of rebellions and insurgencies in the length and breadth of the Sultanate. The crisis was aggravated owing to the death of the Sultan about two thousand miles away from the capital. The auxiliary forces sent to assist the Sultan in Sindh became rebellious, and joined the local insurgents. The Sultan's army was attacked by the local Sindhi insurgents on one side and by the Mongols from the other side.⁴ Meanwhile, in Delhi *Khawājah-'i Jahān* Aḥmad Ayāz raised a six or seven year-old boy to the throne, declaring him to be the son and successor of the deceased Sultan.⁵

Amidst chaos in Sindh, some of the *umarā'*, Sufis and '*ulamā'*' present in the royal camp requested Fīrūz ibn Rajab to ascend the throne, as immediate selection of a Sultan was urgently needed. These notables included, among others, Makhdūmzādah 'Abbāsī, Shaykh al-Shuyūkh al-Miṣrī, and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the Chishtī leader.⁶ Fīrūz was the nephew of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, and cousin of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.⁷ Moreover, he had been nominated by the latter as his heir-apparent during his illness.⁸ According to contemporary historians such as 'Iṣāmī and Baranī, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was issueless,⁹ and therefore, he had nominated his cousin as his successor. Initially, Fīrūz was reluctant to ascend the throne, arguing

⁴ Ibid., pp. 533-34, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, pp. 42-43.

⁵ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 539, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 44.

⁶ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 535-36.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 532, 535, 539, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, '*Ajā'ib al-Asfār*', pp. 105, 110, 139, and Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 592.

⁸ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 532, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, pp. 42, 43.

⁹ 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salāṭin*, p. 433, Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 535, and Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 592. However, Farishtah argues that the boy raised to throne in Delhi by *Khawājah-'i Jahān* Aḥmad Ayāz was the son of the deceased Sultan. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 45. The statement of 'Iṣāmī and Baranī deserves credence over that of Farishtah, since 'Iṣāmī and Baranī were the contemporary historians of Sultan Fīrūz.

that he would not be able to perform it properly. Nonetheless, on the insistence of the *umarā*, *‘ulamā* and the Sufis, he agreed to accept the office.¹⁰ According to ‘Afif, who was a frequent attendant at his court, Fīrūz argued that he wanted to go to Makkah for pilgrimage,¹¹ but he was forced to ascend the throne by Makhdūmzādah ‘Abbāsī, Shaykh al-Shuyūkh al-Miṣrī, and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd.¹² In this way, Sultan Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq (r. 1351-88) was unanimously declared as the Sultan on the fourth day after the demise of the late Sultan.¹³

‘Afif informs that while on his way back to Delhi from Thatta, when Sultan Fīrūz reached a town named Sarsatī, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd said to Sultan Fīrūz that from Thatta till there, he had prayed to God for his (the Sultan’s) safety, but from this place onwards began the *wilāyah* (spiritual domain) of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī. Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn advised the Sultan to ask Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn to pray for his safe entrance into Delhi. Acting upon his advice, the Sultan sent a message to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, who replied: “Since Shaykh Naṣīr has entrusted you to my care, I hope that by the grace of God, you will enter Delhi victorious.” The Sultan took it as a prediction in his favour from the Shaykh.¹⁴

¹⁰ Shams Sirāj ‘Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (*Manāqib-i Fīrūzshāhī*), Urdu trans. Mawlawī Muḥammad Fidā ‘Alī Ṭālib (Hyderabad: Dār al-Tab‘ Jāmi‘ah ‘Uthmāniyyah, 1938), p. 37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37. See also Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 43.

¹² Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 535-36.

¹³ At that time, Fīrūz’s accession was challenged by Khudāwandzādah, a daughter of late Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq and a sister of late Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. She wanted her son, Khusrau Malik, to ascend the throne. See details in ‘Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 38.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

As pointed out earlier, after the demise of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, his *wazīr*, *Khwājah-i Jahān* Aḥmad Ayāz, had raised a boy to the throne in Delhi pretending that he was the son of the deceased Sultan. When the *wazīr* was apprised of Fīrūz's accession and his march towards Delhi, he sent some influential *umarā'* and '*ulamā'* to Sultan Fīrūz, and offered to become his deputy or take some territory for independent exercise of authority. At this point, Sultan Fīrūz invited some of the '*ulamā'* and Sufis, including Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, Mawlānā Kamāl al-Dīn of Sāmānah and Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn Bākhazī, and held a consultative meeting with them. When the Sultan asked them for their advice according to *Sharī'ah*, Mawlānā Kamāl al-Dīn unequivocally expressed his preference for the one who declared his authority first,¹⁵ thus, implying his approval for the Sultan's assumption of power. Consequently, two of the messengers from Delhi were detained and the *wazīr* was asked to submit to the authority of Sultan Fīrūz. In this way, the political authority of Sultan Fīrūz was endorsed by the '*ulamā'* and Sufis at a critical juncture, when it was challenged by rival contenders to the throne of Delhi. As a token of gratitude for the role played by the '*ulamā'* and Sufis in his accession, as well as on the occasion of challenge to his political authority, Sultan Fīrūz devised policies, which were generally congenial to the '*ulamā'* and Sufis. Moreover, he respected the '*ulamā'* and the Sufis. 'Afif records that before his accession, he had heard the predictions about his kingship from four different Sufi Shaykhs.¹⁶ It might have enhanced the faith of the Sultan in the powers of the Sufis.

¹⁵ Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 121-22, Bakhshī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, p. 113, and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 45.

¹⁶ Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn, the grandson of Bābā Farīd, had predicted about Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Fīrūz Tughluq that all of them would become kings. At that time, Fīrūz was quite young. The Shaykh granted four and a half, twenty-seven and forty yards of unstitched cloth to them respectively, when the three went to see the Shaykh. The length of the cloth indicated the

6.1.2 Religious Orientation and Personal Disposition of the Sultan

The policy of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq towards the Sufis was also affected by his religious orientation and personal disposition. He is described by his contemporary historians as profoundly religious in his personal orientation. For instance, Baranī considers him the most religiously-oriented of all the Sultans of Delhi, who surpassed all others in fulfillment of the religious obligations of Islam.¹⁷ In a similar manner, 'Afif portrays him as a saintly person, and an epitome of goodness.¹⁸ These views of contemporary historians have been uncritically accepted by modern historians such as Iṣlāhī, who has depicted the Sultan in a similar vein.¹⁹ Nonetheless, these views have been critically examined by Moinul Haq and Nizami. Moinul Haq observes that though Baranī praises Sultan Fīrūz more than he deserved, the latter's political ideology approximated to Baranī's ideas more than any other Sultan.²⁰ Nizami also argues that there seems to be some exaggeration in these statements and opinions. For instance, notwithstanding the Sultan's 'godliness', he was not able to give up his habit of drinking.²¹

Sultan Fīrūz was inclined towards Sufism. According to 'Afif, he was a disciple of Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn of Ajōdhan, the grandson of Bābā Farīd.²² Simon Digby infers

length of their reigns in lunar years respectively. The second prediction came from Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Panipati, when the three went to pay homage to him. The third prediction was from Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', when Fīrūz went to Ghiyāthpur in order to see the Shaykh. The fourth prediction was from Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. See details in 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), pp. 23-25.

¹⁷ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 548, 561.

¹⁸ 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), pp. 17-19, 37, 253, 321.

¹⁹ Iṣlāhī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehli aur Shari'at-i Islāmiyyah*, pp. 39-41.

²⁰ S. Moinul Haq, *Baranī's History of the Tughluqs (Being a Critical Study of the Relevant Chapters of Tārīkh-i Firuz-Shahi)* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1959), p. 91.

²¹ For a detailed critical analysis of the Sultan's religious orientation and the views of historians about it, see Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehli kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 385-438.

²² 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 252. See also 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 216, 217, 303.

that during his reign, the Sultan visited the tomb of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' probably on numerous occasions.²³ During his expedition in Bahrāich, the Sultan visited the tomb of Saiyyid Sālār Mas'ūd. After a few days, he saw the Saiyyid in his dream. Next morning, the Sultan got his head shaved like the disciples of Sufi Shaykhs, and the *umarā'* imitated him.²⁴ The Sultan held the Sufis and their eminent disciples in high esteem. Two of his *umarā'* holding high official positions under Fīrūz were Khwājah Ḥussām al-Dīn Junaydī, a disciple of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn of Multan, and Saiyyid al-Ḥijāb Khwājah Ma'rūf, a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'. Both of them were known for their godliness, piety and honesty.²⁵

Sultan Fīrūz also took a keen interest in *fiqh* or Muslim jurisprudence, as he himself was quite well-versed in the subject.²⁶ He was inclined towards *Shari'ah*, and he also tried to strictly enforce *Shari'ah* in the Sultanate. For instance, he banned the utensils of gold and silver as well as the use of such precious metals and gems in weapons.²⁷ He also ordered the removal of clothes and paintings with images from the walls of his palace.²⁸ He also banned the use of silk cloth for men.²⁹ These and many other measures undertaken by the regime suggest that the Sultan tried to bring people back to the fold of *Shari'ah*, and those whose beliefs were not considered to conform to *Shari'ah* were

²³ Simon Digby, "Early Pilgrimages to the Graves of Mu'in al-dīn Sijzī and Other Indian Chishtī Shaykhs", in *Islamic Society and Culture*, ed. Israel and Wagle, p. 98, n.4.

²⁴ 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 253.

²⁵ Khwājah Ḥussām al-Dīn Junaydī was responsible for revenue assessment, and Saiyyid al-Ḥijāb Khwājah Ma'rūf was a *nadīm* (a close associate or confidant) of and adviser to Sultan Fīrūz. See details in *ibid.*, pp. 307-8, 295-98.

²⁶ Anonymous, *Sirat-i Firūzshāhī*, MS, Mawlānā Āzād Library, Muslim University, Aligarh, no. 111, ff. 290-91, as cited in Iṣlāhī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī aur Shari'at-i Islāmiyyah*, p. 18.

²⁷ Fīrūz Shāh, *Futūḥāt-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 11, and 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 254.

²⁸ Fīrūz Shāh, *Futūḥāt-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 11, and 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 254.

²⁹ Fīrūz Shāh, *Futūḥāt-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 11.

persecuted. For instance, some of the members of the extremist shī'a groups were persecuted, and their books were burnt.³⁰ Similarly, the adherents of another group were executed and punished as their practices were considered to be contrary to *Sharī'ah*.³¹ In addition, a certain person named Rukn al-Dīn, who lived in Delhi and claimed to be the promised *Mahdī*, was executed along with his followers.³²

Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq is said to have had a mild disposition and a forgiving nature.³³ The state policy of aggressive warfare was abandoned by him.³⁴ Being kind-hearted and lenient, the Sultan abolished many inhuman punishments prevailing at that time.³⁵ The loans granted to the people during the previous regime were written off.³⁶ He abolished many illegal and unlawful taxes from the Sultanate,³⁷ and introduced revenue reforms as well.³⁸ The property of the people confiscated during the previous regime was

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7. It is important to note that the word *Abahatiyan* used for the group in *Futūhāt-i Fīrūzshāhī* literally means those who indulge in incestuous practices. The work further informs that the adherents of the group indulged in immoral vices such as adultery.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

³³ For instance, he pardoned *Khwājah-'i Jahān* Aḥmad Ayāz, who had placed a boy on the throne of Delhi. The Sultan also granted him *jāgīrs*, so that he could retire and spend the rest of his life in peace. However, he was murdered by one of the *umarā'* named Shēr Khan, who was an arch enemy of Aḥmad Ayāz. See details in 'Afīf, *Tārikh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), pp. 60-61.

³⁴ In addition to his mild temperament, his lack of military prowess also prompted him to do so. In the opinion of Banerjee, Sultan Fīrūz was not a skilled military general. Banerjee, *History of Firuz Shah Tughluq*, p. 26; for details of his military expeditions, see pp. 26-45.

³⁵ These included cutting of hands and feet, pouring molten lead in ears, cutting lips, and trampling on by elephant, etc. Fīrūz Shāh, *Futūhāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 2-4.

³⁶ 'Afīf, *Tārikh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 72.

³⁷ The Sultan abolished a number of taxes such as tax on butchers, fish-sellers, flower-sellers, vegetable-sellers, betel leaf-sellers, soap-makers, and rope-makers, etc. See details in Fīrūz Shāh, *Futūhāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 5, and 'Afīf, *Tārikh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), pp. 256-57. For a list of taxes see *Sirat-i Fīrūzshāhī*, as cited in Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, pp. 285-86, and Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Appendix H, "Taxes abolished by Firuz Shāh", pp. 244-47.

³⁸ See details in Banerjee, *History of Firuz Shah Tughluq*, p 114-18, 121-25, Haq, Barani's *History of the Tughluqs*, pp. 102-3, and Iṣlāhī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī aur Sharī'at-i Islāmiyyah*, pp. 86-89.

restored.³⁹ A charity department, *dīwān-i khayrāt*, was established.⁴⁰ Much attention was paid to works of public welfare during his reign.⁴¹ He also fixed annual stipends of ten million *tankahs* for the poor and the needy.⁴² In the opinion of Lane-Poole, the Sultan was 'a father to his people,' as he was adored by them.⁴³ To conclude, he tried to placate the people, and compensate the damage done to them in general during the previous regime. He restored peace and order in the Sultanate by winning them over.

6.1.3 The Contemporary Religio-intellectual Environment

The contemporary religio-intellectual environment in Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq's reign also played a crucial role in shaping his policy towards the Sufis. The era witnessed two conflicting developments in India. These were the development of *fiqh* and critique on Sufism, and the dissemination of the views of Ibn al-'Arabī in India.

6.1.3.1 Development of *Fiqh* and Critique on Sufism

Like the previous reign, the reign of Sultan Fīrūz was also marked by the development of *fiqh* or Muslim jurisprudence in India. Eminent jurists flourished in the Sultanate of Delhi, and the era witnessed the production of *fatāwā* (legal verdicts) literature.⁴⁴ A

³⁹ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 558-59, and Fīrūz Shāh, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 16.

⁴⁰ The charity department helped the poor girls who were unmarried for want of dowry. The complete data of such girls was kept and arrangements were made for their marriage. It also kept a record and distributed money among the poor and the needy. 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), pp. 242-43. See also Banerjee, *History of Firuz Shah Tughluq*, p. 83.

⁴¹ The Sultan constructed small irrigational dams, canals, inns, mosques, colleges, hospitals, public baths and bridges, etc. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 562-70, and Fīrūz Shāh, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 11, 15 and Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, pp. 62-63. See also Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 406-24.

⁴² 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 129.

⁴³ Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India under Muhammedan Rule*, p. 149.

⁴⁴ For a detailed survey, see Zafar al-Islam Islahi, "Origin and Development of *Fatāwā*-Compilation in Medieval India", *Hamdard Islamicus*, Karachi, vol. 20, no. 1 (Jan-March, 1997), pp. 7-18.

monumental work on *fiqh* titled *Al-Fatāwā al-Tātārkhāniyyah*⁴⁵ was compiled by Mawlānā ‘Alīm ibn al-‘Alā’ of Andrapat (d. 1384 A.D./786 A.H.), and dedicated to Tātār Khān, the famous military general of the era, who patronized him.⁴⁶ It was comprised of thirty volumes dealing with a variety of issues. Another renowned work was *Fatāwā-i Firūzshāhī*, compiled by Mawlānā Ṣadr al-Dīn Ya‘qūb Muḏaffar Kirmānī at the request of the Sultan. However, he died before its completion. Later, the book was revised and completed by some other scholar.⁴⁷ In addition, *Fawā'id-i Firūzshāhī* was compiled by Mawlānā Sharaf Muḏammad al-‘Aṭā’ī, who dedicated it to the Sultan. Though not exclusively on *fiqh*, the work dealt with various aspects of Islamic beliefs and practices.⁴⁸ Following the pattern of the jurists, who compiled collections of *fatāwā* or legal verdicts, a Suhrawardī Sufi, Shaykh Faḏl Allāh ibn Muḏammad ibn Ayyūb, wrote *Fatāwā-'i Sūfiyyah*. Since the approach of the author was radically different from that of the jurists in dealing with various issues, the work was criticized by such ‘*ulamā*’ as Ibn al-Kamāl.⁴⁹

As pointed out earlier, Sultan Firūz was quite well-versed in *fiqh*. He patronized some of the renowned jurists of the age, such as Mawlānā Ṣadr al-Dīn Kirmānī. The Sultan used to consult the ‘*ulamā*’ and the jurists on various administrative issues. For instance, in order to curtail the influence of some of the groups, which did not conform to *Shari'ah*, he consulted them. It was after getting a verdict from them, these groups were

⁴⁵ ‘Alīm ibn al-‘Alā’, *Al-Fatāwā al-Tātārkhāniyyah*, ed. Qāḏī Sajjād Ḥusayn, 5 vols., Hyderabad, Deccan: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif, 1984.

⁴⁶ ‘Afīf, *Tārikh-i Firūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 265, and Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, p. 58. For a brief analysis of *Al-Fatāwā al-Tātārkhāniyyah*, see Iṣlāhī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī aur Shari'at-i Islāmiyyah*, pp. 23-25. For a brief biographical sketch of Mawlānā ‘Alīm ibn al-‘Alā’, see ‘Abd al-Ḥa'iyy, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, vol. II, pp. 95-96.

⁴⁷ For a brief analysis of *Fatāwā-i Firūzshāhī*, see Iṣlāhī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī aur Shari'at-i Islāmiyyah*, pp. 21-23.

⁴⁸ Nizāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 397-98.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 389, n.2.

punished.⁵⁰ Similarly, the 'ulamā' and jurists were consulted before imposing a tax on artificial irrigation by canals called *ḥaqq-i sharb*.⁵¹ However, in the opinion of Nizami, it is wrong to assume that the 'ulamā' and jurists had dominated the decision-making in the Sultanate under Firūz.⁵²

As the influence of *fiqh* increased, the 'ulamā', who were more cautious in matters of *Sharī'ah* and disapproved of Sufism, became more critical of some of the Sufi groups, and their doctrines and practices. There is no gainsaying that the adherents of the so-called *bē-Shar'* or libertine Sufi groups such as the *Muwallihs*, *Qalandars*, *Haydarīs*, and *Juwāliqīs* indulged in flagrant violation of the rules and regulations of *Sharī'ah* as well as the social norms. It was for their antinomian tendencies that they were vehemently criticized by the some of the 'ulamā', jurists and theologians. Though the presence of such groups in India was not something new, their violation of *Sharī'ah* had become more pronounced and obvious during the Tughluq period owing to the prevailing atmosphere of 'Sharī'ah-mindedness'. Historians like Nizami have also pointed out that the prevailing conditions in the mainstream Sufi circles were not encouraging either. There were clear signs of degeneration in the Sufi circles, as evident from tomb-worship and exaggerated reverence of the Sufi Shaykhs by laypersons bordering on idolizing them, which was highly in vogue.⁵³ Strenuous spiritual exercises and austerity were replaced by rituals and ceremonials often devoid of any inner meaning. Moreover, some of the libertarian groups had also identified themselves with Sufism. Therefore, the

⁵⁰ Firūz Shāh, *Futūḥāt-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 8. See also Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, p. 59.

⁵¹ 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, (Tālib), p. 97.

⁵² Nizāmī, *Salāḥīn-i Dehli kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 419.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

conflict between *fiqh* and Sufism seems to have sharpened during this period. In the opinion of Nizami, the conflict between Sufism and *fiqh*, which found expression in the public debate on the legality of *samā'* during the reign of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, seems to have culminated in the success of the latter during the reign of Sultan Fīrūz.⁵⁴ Though Sultan Fīrūz was influenced both by Sufism and *fiqh*, he became more inclined towards the '*ulamā'*' and the jurists in order to contain the pro-*Waḥdat al-Wujūd* movements of his times.

6.1.3.2 Dissemination of Ibn al-'Arabī's Spiritual Doctrines in India

Shaykh Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī,⁵⁵ also known as *Shaykh-i Akbar*, was a famous Spanish Sufi philosopher, who propounded the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*,⁵⁶ though he himself never employed the expression.⁵⁷ He was a contemporary of Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Ajmeri, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Bābā Farīd. The works of Ibn al-'Arabī were first introduced in India in the thirteenth century by Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī (d.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 389.

⁵⁵ For a detailed biography on Ibn al-'Arabī, see Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn 'Arabi*, Eng. trans. from French Peter Kingsley (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000).

⁵⁶ Ibn al-'Arabī argues that Allah is the Only Being. All is the One, and the One is all. He is Essence, and the rest is His manifestation or His attributes. In other words, the creation is the manifestation of His attributes. For details, see T. Izutsu, *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism, I: The Ontology Ibn Arabi* (Tokyo: Keio University, 1966), S. A. Q. Husaini, *The Pantheistic Monism of Ibn al-'Arabi* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1992 rpt., first published 1970), Michel Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean Without Shore: Ibn 'Arabi, The Book, and the Law*, Eng. trans. David Streight (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), and William C. Chittick, *The Self-disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabi's Cosmology* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000).

⁵⁷ The term *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, literally meaning the Oneness of Being, or the unity of existence, was gradually adopted by the followers of Ibn al-'Arabī to designate his position. The first philosopher to employ the term in a technical sense is Sa'id al-Dīn Farghānī (d. 1296). William C. Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabi" in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 504-5. However, Addas maintains that Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī gave the doctrine of Ibn al-'Arabī the name of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*. Idem, *Quest for the Red Sulphur*, p. 232. Addas further argues that Qūnawī's expression is "highly reductive, and provided Ibn 'Arabi's critics with a dangerous weapon. ... Qūnawī made it more vulnerable to the attacks of the exotericists, the *ahl al-rusūm*." p. 232.

1289), a renowned Persian poet and a disciple of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī. 'Irāqī is said to have stayed in the *khānqāh* of Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā in Multan for some time and married his daughter as well.⁵⁸ According to Aziz Ahmad, 'Irāqī had sent a copy of Ibn al-'Arabī's work, *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, to his brother-in-law, Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Ārif, the son and successor of Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyyā.⁵⁹ In this way, the teachings of Ibn al-'Arabī were introduced in India during the thirteenth century, though they became popular in the fourteenth century.

Historical evidence suggests that during the times of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, the Chishtīs were conversant with the spiritual doctrines of Ibn al-'Arabī, such as his doctrine of Sufi hierarchy, as expounded in his work *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (The Makkan Openings). Sijzī records in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* that he heard about the system of Sufi hierarchy from someone and inquired about it from his preceptor, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn.⁶⁰ However, the name of Ibn al-'Arabī and his works do not find any mention in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*. Nonetheless, it appears that the teachings of Ibn al-'Arabī initially remained confined to a select circle of the Sufis, and were later popularized in the Indian society at large.

The fourteenth century India was marked by the wider spread of the works and doctrines of Ibn al-'Arabī. Sufi scholars such as Shaykh 'Alī Hamadānī (d. 1384),⁶¹

⁵⁸ Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 107-8.

⁵⁹ Aziz Ahmad, *The Sufi and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India*, p. 145.

⁶⁰ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 430.

⁶¹ Shaykh Saiyyid 'Alī Hamadānī was an eminent Sufi of *Silsilah Kubriwiyyah*. He was a prolific scholar, who wrote a commentary on Ibn al-'Arabī's work *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* with the title *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*. He translated *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* into Persian, and authored *Risālah-'i Hal al-Fuṣūṣ* and

Shaykh Abū 'l-Maḥāsīn Sharaf al-Dīn of Delhi (d. 1392),⁶² Khwājah Saiyyid Muḥammad Gēsūdirāz,⁶³ Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Maghrabī⁶⁴ and Mīr Saiyyid Amīr Māh⁶⁵ wrote commentaries and treatises on Ibn al-'Arabī's monumental work, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (Pearls of Wisdom) and the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*. Similarly, Khwājah Mas'ūd Bakk (details infra) propagated the views of Ibn al-'Arabī through his poetry and prose writings, whereas Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manēyri wrote epistles on the subject.⁶⁶ However, it is worth noting that the Sufis believed that the higher truths of Sufism revealed to the Sufi Shaykhs were incommunicable, and if they were communicated, they remained incomprehensible to the laypersons, who were likely to be misled by such

a treatise titled *Risālāh-i Wujūdiyyah* on the subject of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*. For his biographical sketch, ethical and political philosophy, works, and role in Islamization, see Agha Hussain Shah Hamadani, *The Life and Works of Sayyid Ali Hamadani* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1984), and Agha Hussain Hamadani and Muhammad Riaz, ed., *Shah-e-Hamadan Amir Kabir Sayyid Ali Hamadani (A.H. 714-786)*, (Commemorative Volume), *Proceedings of the International Shah-e-Hamadan Conference Held in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, October 2-4, 1987* (Muzaffarabad: Institute of Kashmir Studies, 1988).

⁶² Shaykh Abū 'l-Maḥāsīn Sharaf al-Dīn wrote *'Ayn al-Fuṣūṣ Sharḥ-i al-Fuṣūṣ* to elaborate the views of Ibn al-'Arabī as expressed in *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 388, n.4.

⁶³ According to Aslam, Khwājah Saiyyid Muḥammad Gēsūdirāz played an important role in popularizing the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* in India. Idem, *Malfūzātī Adab kī Tārīkhī Ahammiyyat*, p. 132. Nonetheless, Rizvi calls the Khwājah as 'the most enthusiastic convert' to the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd* (Unity of Manifestation) in India, propounded by 'Alā' al-Dawlah Simnānī (d. 1336). Idem, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. I, pp. 250-51. The Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd* countered the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*. Similarly, Khusro Hussaini also considers the views of the Khwājah not very different from the ideas of Simnānī. Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini, *Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni-i Gisudiraz: On Sufism* (Delhi: Idārah-i Adabiyāt-i Dellī, 1983), p. 17. In fact, Khwājah Gēsūdirāz seems to be influenced by both the schools of spiritual thought. Though he came closer to the position of Simnānī, his works, nonetheless, help popularize the views of Ibn al-'Arabī as well.

⁶⁴ Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Maghrabī wrote a commentary on Ibn al-'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 193.

⁶⁵ Mīr Saiyyid Amīr Māh was an eminent Sufi Shaykh of Bahrā'ich, who was a disciple of Saiyyid 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī Jawārī. He had written a treatise titled *Maṭlūb fī 'Ishq al-Maḥbūb* on the subject of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*. Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 414.

⁶⁶ Nizāmī maintains that Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn has discussed the issues related to *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* in his epistles. Ibid., pp. 388-89, n.6. However, Nadwi argues that the Shaykh articulated the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd*, which was later developed by Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī in India. Idem, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, vol. II, pp. 323-24. Nonetheless, there is no denying the fact that some of the epistles of Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn were written on the elaboration of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, which helped popularize it.

doctrines. For this reason, the Sufi adepts condemned the publicization of one's intricate spiritual experiences, particularly before the novices. Fearing the adverse repercussions of such ideas and doctrines in society, Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā disapproved of some of his letters becoming popular among the people.⁶⁷ Similarly, Khwājah Gēsūdirāz had warned that works such as Ibn al-'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* must not be studied by novices; rather they should prefer studying the basic books on Sufism.⁶⁸ But the views of Ibn al-'Arabī, hitherto restricted to the circles of the Sufi Shaykhs and their select gatherings, were disseminated among the common people owing to the production of profuse literature on Ibn al-'Arabī's works and doctrines. This had critical repercussions for the Indian society at large.

As pointed out in chapter one, a tenth-century Sufi, Ḥusayn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj, was crucified for having uttered *anā al-Haqq* "I am the Truth" in a state of spiritual ecstasy. This self-divinizing cry was tantamount to *shirk* (polytheism) in the eyes of the externalist 'ulamā', who were unaware of spiritual experiences, and were largely concerned with outward conformity to *Sharī'ah* than exploring inner meaning or essence in Muslim practices. Fourteenth century India presents two similar instances of spiritual utterances during the reign of Sultan Fīrūz, which were condemned by the 'ulamā'. Iṣlāhī argues that the Sultan was not opposed to Sufism or the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* as such.⁶⁹ He himself had entered the fold of Sufism by performing *bay'at* at the hands of Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn of Ajōdhan.⁷⁰ He tried to curtail the so-called doctrinal excesses of

⁶⁷ 'Abd al-Haqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, p. 124.

⁶⁸ See details in Gēsūdirāz, *Khātimah (Tarjumah-'i Ādāb al-Muridīn)*, pp. 75-76.

⁶⁹ Iṣlāhī, *Salāḥīn-i Dehlī aur Sharī'at-i Islāmiyyah*, p. 94.

⁷⁰ 'Afīf, *Tārikh-i Firūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 252.

Sufism in India, and reform the Muslim society by persecution of the fervent advocates of the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, which will be dealt with later in detail.

To sum up, the policy and attitude of Sultan Fīrūz towards the Sufis, including the Chishtīs, was largely informed by the role played by the Sufis in Fīrūz's accession to the throne, his religious orientation, personal disposition, and the religio-intellectual environment of the age. This environment was characterized by two conflicting trends, namely, the development of *fiqh*, and the dissemination of the spiritual doctrines of Ibn al-'Arabī in India. What follows is a discussion and analysis of Sultan Fīrūz's policy towards the Sufis, with a particular focus on the Chishtīs.

6.2 Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq's Policy towards the Sufis: 'Rewards and Punishments'

Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq had served in important positions under his predecessor, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. He had witnessed the implementation and the effects of his policies at close quarters. Being the *nā'ib ḥājib* or deputy chamberlain of the previous Sultan, he had the opportunity of meeting the '*ulamā*' and the Sufis, who had been summoned by the Sultan in the royal court or palace. Sultan Fīrūz had first hand knowledge of the maltreatment meted out to some of the Sufis by the deceased Sultan, and he had witnessed their sufferings during the previous regime. Therefore, the policy of Sultan Fīrūz was a reversal of many of the policies of his predecessor. As for the state policy towards the Sufis, the regime tried to placate the Sufis, but at the same time, this policy of conciliation was accompanied by a policy of containment as well. In fact, on the one hand, the state tried to placate the Sufis and revive the Sufi institutions, and on the

other, it attempted to contain the so-called 'excesses of Sufism', which were largely due to the adverse repercussions of the spread of the doctrines and teachings of Ibn al-'Arabī in India. Thus, during the reign of Sultan Fīrūz, one may discern two contrasting patterns of state's interaction with the Sufis, which has been discussed hereunder:

6.2.1 Policy of Conciliation and Revival of Sufi Institutions

Keeping in view that the Sufīs had generally been alienated by the policies of the previous regime, Sultan Fīrūz followed a policy of conciliation towards them. In *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, the Sultan himself states his conviction that it is blessing for a king to be at the door of a *darvēsh*.⁷¹ Since he considered it an honour to visit the *khānqāhs* of the Sufis, the Sultan visited them and sought their blessings.⁷²

Baranī informs that on his way back to Delhi from Thatta, Sultan Fīrūz halted at various places such as Sivistān (Sehwan), Bakhar, Uch, Dīpālpur and Hānsī, and visited the tombs of many Sufi Shaykhs.⁷³ In Uch, he tried to revive the *khānqāh* of late Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn, who was a *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd. The land grants were restored to the Shaykh's sons, and they were also granted stipends. In this way, in the words of Baranī, the Sultan revived the *khānqāh* of the Shaykh and also reorganized his family and descendants.⁷⁴ The Sultan also stayed at Dīpālpur for a few days. He visited the tomb of Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd (Bābā Farīd) in Ajōdhan, and reorganized his descendants. The land grants of the family and the stipends of the family-members and other people

⁷¹ Fīrūz Tughluq, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 17.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ See details in Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 537-39, 543-45.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 538-39.

were restored. The grandsons of Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, the grandson of Bābā Farīd, were granted robes of honour by the Sultan.⁷⁵ It seems important to recall here that the sons and grandsons of Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn of Ajōdhan had accepted high official positions during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq as well.⁷⁶ So the descendants of Bābā Farīd had been beneficiaries of the previous regime. Baranī further informs that Sultan Fīrūz also went to Hānsī, and visited the *khānqāhs* of Sufīs,⁷⁷ but Baranī fails to mention the name of any Sufi Shaykh whom he met.

While highlighting the achievements of Sultan Fīrūz, Baranī records that the *khānqāhs* of the Sufīs, which had been ruined during the previous regime, were revived by him. The long abandoned *khānqāhs* were once again filled by the Sufīs, *darvēshes*, *qalandars*, travelers and poor. Those in charge of the *khānqāhs* were granted villages as well as agricultural lands for the upkeep and maintenance of the *khānqāhs*. Stipends of five, ten, twenty and thirty thousand *tankahs* were also fixed for the *khānqāhs*. The families and descendants of Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn (Bābā Farīd), Shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakarīyyā, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn and Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn of Uch were among the chief beneficiaries, who were given land grants by the Sultan.⁷⁸ It is difficult to uncritically accept this list of the families and descendants of the Sufi Shaykhs, who received favours from the state. As a matter of fact, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn had never married and had no family or descendants as such. However, two sons of his preceptor’s daughter, named Khwājah Muḥammad Imām and Khwājah Mūsā, were

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 543.

⁷⁶ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 196-97.

⁷⁷ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 545.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 560.

brought up by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn,⁷⁹ but there is no evidence to suggest that the two brothers accepted any favour from the state.

In addition, Sultan Fīrūz paid attention to the construction and repair of the shrines and tombs of the Sufis. *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī* reports that a new *jamā'atkhānah* was constructed near the tomb of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'. Moreover, the doors and wooden grills of the tomb were also rebuilt. As a token for his devotion to the Shaykh, the Sultan also donated lamps of gold to the shrine, which were hung inside the tomb with chains of gold.⁸⁰ These gestures of the Sultan suggest that he greatly revered the Shaykh, and also considered it necessary to publicly manifest his devotion and reverence.

The information provided by Baranī clearly reveals that the Sultan considered state intervention and official support necessary for the revival of the Sufi *khānqāhs*. Moreover, Baranī has interpreted the state's measures as attempts to revive the fast disappearing *khānqāh* life in the Sultanate, for which Sultan Fīrūz tried to conciliate and win over the descendants of the Sufis. He tried to establish cordial relations with them, and showered gifts and grants on them as well. Sultan's Fīrūz Tughluq's *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, which presents an official version of the important developments and achievements of the reign, also paints these state measures as attempts to revive Sufism.⁸¹ However, Nizami argues that Baranī's observation regarding the revival in the Sufi

⁷⁹ Bābā Farīd's daughter, Bībī Fāṭimah, was married to his disciple, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq. After the demise of Shaykh Badr al-Dīn and Bībī Fāṭimah, their sons were brought up by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 193.

⁸⁰ Fīrūz Tughluq, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 14, 15.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 17.

khānqāhs as a result of these state measures was inaccurate, as he failed to see that it was not a revival of the *khānqāh* life in its true sense.⁸² Though the abandoned *khānqāhs* were once again inhabited by people, the true spirit of the Sufi traditions could not be revived. It would be more correct to say that the dislocations in the *khānqāh* life, which were the result of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's policies, could not be easily remedied through measures taken by Sultan Fīrūz.

6.2.2 Policy of Containment and Reform

Sultan Fīrūz tried to govern the state in accordance with the laws of *Shari'ah*, as expounded by the contemporary '*ulamā*'. As already discussed, under the influence of the '*ulamā*', who were more cautious in matters of *Shari'ah*, he had attempted to bring people back to the fold of *Shari'ah* through state measures. He also made efforts to contain the 'excesses' of Sufism with a view to reform the society. It was for this reason that he debarred women from shrine pilgrimage, that is, visiting the shrines and tombs of the Sufis, and banned their participation in the shrine festivals⁸³ such as '*urs*'.⁸⁴ It was believed that visitation of shrines by women led to free intermingling of the two sexes.

As pointed out earlier, the teachings Ibn al-'Arabī, particularly the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, were an anathema to some of the '*ulamā*', who also exercised

⁸² Nizāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehli kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, pp. 402-3.

⁸³ Fīrūz Shāh, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 8-9. Those who failed to observe the law were punished as well.

⁸⁴ Literally, it means wedding. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 209. It refers to an annual festival at a Sufi shrine commemorating the death anniversary of a Sufi. It symbolizes the unison of the soul in the Creator. See definition of term pilgrimage as well as '*urs*' in Carl W. Ernst, "An Indo-Persian Guide to Sufi Shrine Pilgrimage" in *Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam*, ed. Grace Martin Smith and Carl W. Ernst (Istanbul: The Iris Press, 1993), pp. 43-45.

considerable influence on the Sultan. Sultan Firūz tried to contain the pro-*Waḥdat al-Wujūd* Movement of his times. In this regard, some of the Sufis were executed. These include the following:

6.2.2.1 Khwājah Mas‘ūd Bakk

Khwājah Mas‘ūd Bakk, a Sufi-philosopher, was a disciple of Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn, the son of Mawlānā Shihāb al-Dīn Imām, who was a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn. He was also a devotee of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. His real name was Shēr Khān, and he was a relative of Sultan Firūz Shāh. Despite the fact that he was a member of the royal family and enjoyed very high official position as well, he gave up life of pleasure and prosperity, and adopted the way of world-renunciation and austerity.⁸⁵ He is considered to be the pioneer of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* Movement in Delhi. He propagated his views through his works. He is credited with the authorship of *Tamhīdāt*, a *dīwān* titled *Nūr al-‘Ayn*,⁸⁶ which later became popular in the Sufi *khānqāhs*, and *Mirāt al-‘Ārifīn* (The Mirror of the Gnostics), written about 1378, which focused on the theme of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, and contained his spiritual revelations.⁸⁷ Most of the time, he remained in a state of ecstasy and spiritual intoxication (*sukr*),⁸⁸ during which he used to utter things which were resented by the ‘*ulamā*’. In the opinion of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, among the Sufis,

⁸⁵ For a brief biographical note and his ideas, see ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, pp. 174-78; see also Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. I, pp. 241-44.

⁸⁶ Saiyyid ‘Abd al-Shakūr Qādirī, “*Dīwān-i Mas‘ūd Bakk*”, (Unpublished Ph.D. diss. Nagpur University, Nagpur, 1972).

⁸⁷ Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujḥānāt*, p. 413. Another book with the same title of *Tamhīdāt* had been written earlier by an early twelfth-century Sufi-scholar, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamdānī (d. 1131).

⁸⁸ ‘Alī, *Tadhkira-i ‘Ulamā-i Hind*, p. 494.

no one had revealed the secrets of Sufism as boldly and candidly as he did.⁸⁹ Khwājah Mas'ūd Bakk was executed during the reign of Fīrūz for his controversial theological formulations. The 'ulamā', who were envious of him, had issued a *fatwā* against him.⁹⁰

6.2.2.2 Shaykh Aḥmad Bihārī and Shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn Kākvi

Shaykh Aḥmad and his fellow Sufi, Shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn Kākvi, were two renowned proponents of the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* during the reign of Sultan Fīrūz. They used to openly express and propagate their ideas in public. The leader of the movement was Shaykh Aḥmad, who originally belonged to Bihar, and had migrated to Delhi and settled there. Shaykh Aḥmad and Shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn had gathered some following in Delhi as well. The former was accused of raising the slogan of *anā al-Ḥaqq* like Ḥallāj, which was quite unacceptable to the some of the 'ulamā' and jurists. Sultan Fīrūz convened a *maḥḍar* or a public debate in order to discuss and debate the issue. Eventually, they both were executed when the 'ulamā' and jurists of Delhi issued a *fatwā* against them.⁹¹ However, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, which provides an official version of the important developments of the reign, portrays the movement of Aḥmad Bihārī as an unorthodox movement. It informs that the followers of the movement were atheists, who considered their leader to be god. Therefore, both Shaykh Aḥmad and Shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn were punished.⁹² *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī* does not mention their execution. Moreover, the

⁸⁹ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, p. 175.

⁹⁰ Muḥammad Būlāq Chishtī, *Rawḍah-'i Aqṭāb* (Delhi: Muḥibb-i Hind Press, 1887), p. 88, as cited in Nizāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehli kē Madhhabī Rujḥānāt*, p. 413. However, Nizāmī writes that in some works, Khwājah Mas'ūd Bakk's year of death has been mentioned as 1397 A.D./800.A.H. If it is correct, then Sultan Fīrūz is not responsible for his execution. p. 413, n.5. Ernst and Lawrence accept that the Khwājah was executed around 1380. Idem, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 41.

⁹¹ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. I, p. 231.

⁹² For details, see Fīrūz Shāh, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 7.

statement regarding their atheistic beliefs seems to be self-contradictory, as they considered their leader to be their god. Rizvi observes that the accusations are typical of the kind of resentment shown by the 'orthodox' against the *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, and these accusations did not necessarily have to be proved.⁹³ It is important to note that Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manēyri, a renowned Sufi of *Silsilah Firdawsiyyah*, was their friend,⁹⁴ and had frequent correspondence with them as well. When Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn heard about their execution, he expressed his grief and condemned these killings. Consequently, he was summoned by the Sultan to Delhi from Bihār, but the royal decree was cancelled at the request of Saiyyid Jalāl al-Dīn Makhdūm-i Jahāniyā.⁹⁵ It was probably for fear of similar consequences that Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manēyri had disapproved of making public some of his letters written to his *khalifah*.⁹⁶

Similarly, in Gujrat, a freedman of Malik 'Ayn al-Mulk Māhrō, a prominent *amir* of Sultan Fīrūz,⁹⁷ raised the slogan of *anā al-Ḥaqq* like Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj. *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhi* informs that he was punished, and his treatise was ordered to be burnt,⁹⁸ but it fails to mention that he was executed on the order of Sultan Fīrūz.⁹⁹

In this way, on the one hand, Sultan Fīrūz tried to placate the Sufis and their descendants by offering them grants and rewards, and on the other, he tried to reform the

⁹³ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. I, p. 231, n.3.

⁹⁴ Manazir Ahmed mistakenly assumes Shaykh Aḥmad Bihārī as a disciple of Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manēyri. There is no historical evidence to suggest it. Idem, *Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388 A.D.)* (Allahabad: Chugh Publications, 1978), p. 86.

⁹⁵ Shāh Shu'ayb Firdawsi, *Manāqib al-Aṣfiyā'* (Lucknow: Newal Kishore, 1870), p. 346.

⁹⁶ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 124.

⁹⁷ For details about Malik 'Ayn al-Mulk Māhrō, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhi*, p. 584.

⁹⁸ Fīrūz Tughluq, *Futūḥāt-i Fīrūzshāhi*, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Niẓāmī, *Salāṭin-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 426.

society and curtail the influence of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s teachings and doctrines in the Sultanate of Delhi through punishment.

Section II Chishtīs under Sultan Fīrūz: Preserving the Space of the *Silsilah*

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the eminent Chishtī Shaykhs, who were the *khulafā’* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’, tried to preserve the space of their *Silsilah* and keep it free from the interference of the state. These Chishtī traditions were kept alive by the celebrated Chishtī Shaykhs under Sultan Fīrūz. What follows is a brief discussion on how the Chishtī leadership under Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd and another notable Chishtī Sufī, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī, tried to preserve the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* under Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq.

6.3 Sultan Fīrūz and the Chishtī Leadership under Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn

After Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd assumed the Chishtī leadership at Delhi. While highlighting how Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn tried to uphold the Chishtī traditions, the relationship between Sultan Fīrūz and the Shaykh has been discussed in the following:

6.3.1 Role of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn in Fīrūz’s Accession

As already discussed, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd was among those religious dignitaries, who had been summoned to Kāthiāwār by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq from Delhi. According to Baranī, after the death of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq in

Sindh, the Shaykh was one of those leading men who called on Fīrūz to ascend the throne.¹⁰⁰ ‘Afīf informs that after Fīrūz’s accession to the throne, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn advised the new Sultan to rule with justice and equity, or else he would pray to God for another ruler. The new Sultan promised to act according to the Shaykh’s advice. Upon this, the Shaykh told the new Sultan that he had prayed to God to grant him forty years of rule. The Shaykh also sent him thirty-nine dates¹⁰¹ indicating the length of his reign, which was thirty-nine lunar years.

As pointed out earlier, when Sultan Fīrūz received some envoys from the *Khwājah-i Jahān*, Aḥmad Ayāz, the former held a consultative meeting with some religious notables including Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. Though primary sources are silent regarding the role of the Shaykh in the consultative meeting, it may be inferred that he did not express his opinion, and remained silent in the meeting, which suggests that he approved the verdict of Mawlānā Kamāl al-Dīn, who recognized the accession of Fīrūz.¹⁰² It was at a very critical juncture that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was drawn into politics on the issue of succession. Placed in a difficult situation as the head of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, the Shaykh played a crucial role along with others in raising Fīrūz to the throne.

¹⁰⁰ Baranī mentions the presence of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd in the royal camp of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq in Thatta. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 535. However, Badāyūnī writes that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd had secretly nominated Fīrūz as Sultan at Delhi while Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was busy in suppressing rebellions in Gujrat, Deccan and Sindh. The nomination of Fīrūz was confirmed by Makhdūmzādah ‘Abbāsī. When the Sultan came to know about it, he summoned the three—Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn, Makhdūmzādah ‘Abbāsī and Fīrūz—to Gōṇḍal (Kāthiāwār). The Sultan also issued orders for their execution, but before the orders could be executed, the Sultan fell ill and died. Al-Badāonī, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, (Ranking), vol. I, pp. 322-23. The account of Badāyūnī cannot be accepted, as it is a later source, and the account is not confirmed by any contemporary or near contemporary source. Husain also discredits the story of Badāyūnī, and calls it a legend. Idem, *Tughluq Dynasty*, p. 389.

¹⁰¹ ‘Afīf, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 25. According to the Gregorian Calendar, the Sultan ruled for a period of thirty-seven years.

¹⁰² Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. II, p. 45.

In fact, the circumstances had forced the Shaykh to participate in the political affairs of the Sultanate, and play the role of a king-maker, along with other religious notables. At that time, it was difficult to close his eyes to the rising storm, and isolate himself from the public affairs. Afterwards, the Shaykh was never seen in the royal court or in the camp.

6.3.2 The Shaykh's Attitude towards the Regime

After Sultan Fīrūz's accession, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn returned from Sindh to Delhi in 1353. Owing to the Shaykh's role in his accession, it would be a mistake to assume that he had aligned himself with the regime. Notwithstanding the role he played in the Sultan's accession, the Shaykh did not identify himself with the regime. Till his death in 1356, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn remained aloof from politics and court life. He criticized the rising prices of essential commodities during the reign of Sultan Fīrūz.¹⁰³ While narrating the stories of Caliph 'Umar and Seljūqid ruler, Malik Alp Arsalān (r. 1063-72), the Shaykh commented that all the efforts of the rulers of the past were directed towards making the subjects prosperous,¹⁰⁴ indirectly suggesting that his contemporary rulers were negligent of this. Moreover, he used to exhort the rulers to administer even-handed justice. He used to say that justice of rulers is better than abundance of crops.¹⁰⁵ The statement of the Shaykh seems to be directed towards Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Sultan Fīrūz, who paid a great deal of attention to agriculture. It suggests that he was not pleased with the Sultans, particularly on issues pertaining to the administration of justice in the Sultanate.

¹⁰³ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, pp. 88, 185 and 240. Cf. Baranī's statement indicating prosperity of the regime. Idem, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 554.

¹⁰⁴ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 140.

6.3.3 Sultan Fīrūz's Interaction with the Shaykh

As mentioned earlier, Sultan Fīrūz rewarded many Sufi Shaykhs and their families. It is interesting to note that the name of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was not included in Baranī's list of the Sufi Shaykhs, who were granted land and cash grants by Sultan Fīrūz.¹⁰⁶ Either the Sultan might not have presented any offerings to the Shaykh, or the Sultan might have sent some *futūh* to the Shaykh, which the latter might have turned down, lest it might be taken as a gift in lieu of the Shaykh's support to the Sultan in his accession. Like the earlier Chishtī Shaykhs, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn might have used his discretion in accepting or rejecting the cash *futūh*.

It seems that Sultan Fīrūz wanted to establish cordial and friendly relations with the Chishtī leadership. *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* informs that the Sultan once visited the *jamā'atkhānah* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn in Delhi. When the Sultan reached there, accompanied by an influential *amīr*, A'zam Tātār Khān, the Shaykh was taking his midday nap. It was after some time that the Shaykh's personal attendant, Mawlānā Zayn al-Dīn, informed him about the royal visitors. The Shaykh woke up, performed ablutions and offered prayers instead of going out in the courtyard and receiving the Sultan. The Sultan, who had to wait there for some time, got annoyed and said to Tātār Khān: "We are not king. He (the Shaykh) is the real king." In the meantime, the Shaykh came out of his cell. A rug was spread, on which they sat for a while, and then left.¹⁰⁷ Though the

¹⁰⁶ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 560.

¹⁰⁷ Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 219. In his earlier work, Nizami had inferred from the account that the Sultan had to return without meeting the Shaykh, who remained busy in prayer. See Introduction in Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, pp. 58-59. The same version has been uncritically accepted by Ḥabīb.

account of *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* is somewhat vague, it may be inferred that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn sat with the Sultan for a while. However, the conversation of the two has not been recorded in the *malḡūz*. So it is difficult to assume what kind of discussion might have taken place during the meeting.

Nonetheless, one thing is clear from the account that the meeting terminated on an unhappy note, as the Sultan left the place thoroughly unhappy. Riazul Islam infers that the way the Shaykh treated the Sultan was also a way of putting him on notice that his visits in future would not be welcome.¹⁰⁸ Nizami argues that on the basis of the account of *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, it cannot be assumed that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was ill-disposed towards Sultan Fīrūz, or he was disillusioned with him; rather, one finds the Shaykh showing 'goodwill' to the Sultan on other occasions.¹⁰⁹ As evidence, Nizami cites another incident from *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, which recounts that before leading a military expedition to Jājnagar, some astrologers spread rumours in Delhi by that the Sultan would not return alive from the campaign. When Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn heard about these rumours, he recommended an act of charity (*ṣadaqah*) to the Sultan in order to overcome his fear, and communicated it to him through one of his disciples, *Khān-i Jahān* Maqbūl, the *wazīr* of the Sultan.¹¹⁰

Ḥaḍrat Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', p. 172. However, later Nizami accepted the account of *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* regarding the meeting of the Shaykh and the Sultan. Idem, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁸ Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 258.

¹⁰⁹ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 81.

¹¹⁰ Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 21; see also Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, pp. 81-82.

Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim reports another occasion when a huge commotion in the *jamā‘ atkhānah* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was caused by a missing Prince, who was the son of Sultan Fīrūz. The account runs as follows: The Sultan’s son once came to the *jamā‘ atkhānah* of the Shaykh to see him. He was accompanied by his tutor named Ḥātim, who was a disciple of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn. Though the Prince had got permission of the visit from his father, he had not sought any permission for getting enrolled as the Shaykh’s disciple. When the Prince and his tutor met the Shaykh and requested him to accept the Prince as his disciple, the Shaykh inquired whether prior permission had been sought from the Sultan for it. Lying, the tutor replied in the affirmative. Thereupon, the Shaykh enrolled the Prince as his disciple. Afterwards, the Prince, his tutor and other associates left the place. However, instead of returning to the palace, the Prince went to a hideout with the woman he loved, and remained there for three days. Meanwhile, the news of the missing Prince was reported to the Sultan, who ordered inquiry into the matter. The worried father also sent messengers to Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn to enquire about the Prince, but the Shaykh communicated his lack of knowledge about it. After three days, when the Prince came out of the hideout, the infuriated Sultan got his tutor executed along with his associates.¹¹¹

Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim further informs that on that occasion a rumour had also spread among the people of Delhi that the Prince had obtained an amulet (*ta‘widh*) from the Shaykh in order to ascend the throne after his father’s demise. Sultan Fīrūz did not press the matter, and overlooked it. However, he sent the Prince away from the capital, and punished the associates of the Prince. The Sultan also sent a message to the Shaykh that

¹¹¹ Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi‘ al-Kalim*, p. 220.

those who had shown insolence to the Shaykh had received their due punishment.¹¹² It clearly shows that in the post-accession period, the relationship of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd and Sultan Fīrūz was a comfortable one, neither too friendly nor antagonistic. Like his predecessors, while trying to preserve the space of his *Silsilah*, the Shaykh tried to avert animosity or hostility with the political authorities.

6.3.4 ‘Pro-*Shari‘ah*’ Approach of the Shaykh: Bridging the Gulf between *Shari‘ah* and Sufism

Another factor worthy of mention in the relationship of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn with the state was his ‘*Shari‘ah*-mindedness’, i.e. cautiousness in matters pertaining to *Shari‘ah*, or his approach, which may be termed as ‘pro-*Shari‘ah*’. As pointed out above, the Tughluq period was marked by tremendous development in *fiqh* studies in India. Consequently, the general religio-intellectual environment of the Sultanate of Delhi had been greatly influenced by it, as there seemed to be a growing inclination towards the observance of *Shari‘ah* in the Muslim society, more noticeably in the circles of the ‘*ulamā*’, many of whom were very critical of Sufism. Though the controversy of *Shari‘ah* and *ṭariqah*, or Sufism, was never resolved, the growing inclination towards *Shari‘ah* once again evoked criticism of some of the Sufi doctrines and practices in the said era. Moreover, the anti-Sufism forces had been reinforced by criticism of Sufi doctrines and practices by Imām Ibn Taymiyyah as well as in reaction to the teachings of Shaykh Ibn al-‘Arabī in India, which were strongly condemned by some of the ‘*ulamā*’. In addition, the opposition to Sufi doctrines and practices had been intensified during the times of the Tughluq Sultans since degeneration and decline in Sufi circles had also set

¹¹² Ibid.

in, and many of the non-conformist Sufi groups flagrantly violated the norms of *Shari'ah*. The growth of antinomian tendencies in many Sufi circles amply proves this point. The yawning gulf between the Sufis and the '*ulamā*', who were opposed to Sufism and the Sufis, seemed to have widened, and thus, became more conspicuous.

Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd stressed on the need for strict adherence to *Shari'ah*.¹¹³ He himself was well-versed in *fiqh*, and that was why, he was referred to by the people as Abū Ḥanīfah Thānī,¹¹⁴ the Second Abū Ḥanīfah—one of the most eminent jurists of Islam. However, regarding his 'pro- *Shari'ah*' approach, it needs to be borne in mind, that it was as much in response to the challenges of the times as owing to his own personal religious orientation. There is ample evidence to prove that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was very cautious in matters pertaining to the outward observance of *Shari'ah* during the lifetime of his preceptor, which was long before the dissemination of the views of Ibn Taymiyyah in India.¹¹⁵

Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn adopted a two-pronged strategy: first, he tried to counter the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah, and secondly, he attempted to put his own house in order by initiating reform of Sufism 'from within'. The strategy was aimed at preempting any further external attack on Sufism, and its doctrines and practices from the '*ulamā*' holding official positions in the Sultanate. Here one may recall how the state-allied '*ulamā*' had urged the previous Sultans of Delhi, including Iletmish and Ghiyāth al-Dīn

¹¹³ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 26.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 12, 34.

¹¹⁵ See, for instance, an incident narrated by Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq when Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn condemned *samā*' with musical instruments, and it was reported to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' as well. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 88.

Tughluq, to convene *maḥḍars* or public debates on issues pertaining to Sufism. Apparently, these debates were meant to determine the legality or otherwise of *samāʿ*, but these may be interpreted as pragmatic moves on the part of the state-allied 'ulamā' to undermine the authority and influence of the Sufi Shaykhs in the eyes of the Sultan, the high state officials, as well as the people at large.

While countering the views of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn rejected the anthropomorphic conception of God propounded by the former. The existence of Khwājah Khidr, which was denied by the Imām, was affirmed by the Shaykh.¹¹⁶ Unlike Ibn Taymiyyah, the Shaykh respected the *qalandars*.¹¹⁷ Similarly, contrary to the views of the Imām, the Shaykh believed that the vision of God is possible in this world.¹¹⁸ In addition to these, their positions greatly differed on important issues pertaining to Sufism such as *samāʿ*, prostration before a Sufi Shaykh, and the practice of shrine pilgrimage, which have been discussed hereunder:

Imām Ibn Taymiyyah was a critic of *samāʿ* and *raqs*.¹¹⁹ Contrary to it, *Khayr al-Majālis* informs that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn believed that *samāʿ* was a source of the soul's nourishment.¹²⁰ He used to attend the *samāʿ* gatherings organized in his

¹¹⁶ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, pp. 112-13.

¹¹⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah wrote *Risālah-'i Majdhūb* to condemn the enraptured/ecstatic and insane people. Idem, *Taṣawwuf kī Ḥaqīqat* and *Risālah-'i Majdhūb*, (bound together), Urdu trans. 'Abd al-Razzāq Malīḥabādī (Faisalabad: Ṭāriq Academy, 2002), pp. 66-69, 86-110.

¹¹⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Kitāb al-Wasīlah*, p. 55, and Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, pp. 112-13.

¹¹⁹ Ibn Taymiyyah wrote *Risālah-'i Samāʿ* in condemnation of *samāʿ*. For a brief summary of his views in this regard, see Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, *Taṣawwuf kī Ḥaqīqat*, pp. 41-43, 75-80.

¹²⁰ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majālis*, pp. 43-44.

jamā' atkhānah.¹²¹ However, some historians have mistakenly assumed that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was critical of *samā'*. For instance, Dara Shikoh contends that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was opposed to the practice of *samā'*.¹²² Dārā Shikōh's work is a seventeenth-century source, and his statement cannot be given precedence over the statement of *Khayr al-Majālis*. Similarly, Bruce Lawrence also observes the Shaykh's wariness toward *samā'*.¹²³ Lawrence seems to have misinterpreted an incident from *Akhhār al-Akhyār* when Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn disapproved of *samā'*, in which the singer was a woman and there were musical instruments as well.¹²⁴ It must be remembered that according to the Chishtī Shaykhs, *samā'* was permissible only under some conditions.¹²⁵ For instance, *samā'* should not be accompanied with musical instruments, and the singer should not be a woman. The views of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn were very clear and explicit in this regard. He was not opposed to *samā'* *per se*; he merely disapproved *samā'* that failed to fulfill the conditions in which it was permitted. These conditions were related to the singer, hearer (the audience), content of the song and the musical instruments. The conditions in which *samā'* was permitted, according to Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn, were the following: (i) the singer should neither be a boy nor a woman, but he should be a grown-up person; (ii) the audience should be absorbed in the remembrance of God during *samā'*; (iii) the song should not contain anything that is forbidden by *Sharī'ah*; and (iv) the *samā'* should be without musical instruments, or at the most, accompanied by such

¹²¹ For instance, see Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, pp. 31, 306, 337.

¹²² Dārā Shikōh, *Safīnat al-Awliyā'*, p. 136.

¹²³ Lawrence, *Notes from a Distant Flute*, pp. 25-26.

¹²⁴ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, p. 88.

¹²⁵ For instance, see the views of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn in Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 418-19, 164-65, 196, and *Miftāḥ al-'Ashiqīn* (*malfūz* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd), in *Hasht Bahisht*, pp. 18-19.

simple instruments as flute.¹²⁶ Therefore, it is erroneous to assume that the Shaykh had any reservations about *samāʿ*. Nizami also argues that the Shaykh believed in *samāʿ*, and cites the statements from *Khayr al-Majālis* as its evidence.¹²⁷

However, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn's position on some Sufi practices, such as prostration before the Shaykh, differed from his preceptors, Bābā Farīd and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn.¹²⁸ Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn was critical of prostrating before one's spiritual mentor.¹²⁹ Though he himself used to prostrate before his own preceptor, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn, he never allowed his disciples to prostrate before him.¹³⁰ Bruce Lawrence rightly remarks that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn relaxed the Chishtī discipline of strict obedience to the *pir*.¹³¹ Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq informs that once Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn declared that the practice of a Shaykh is no justification for its continuance. All actions should be judged on the basis of Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH),¹³² and thus, not on the basis of the actions of a Shaykh. Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn also condemned exaggerated reverence

¹²⁶ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 232.

¹²⁷ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, pp. 107, 113.

¹²⁸ From a statement of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn in *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* that he accepted the practice of prostration from his disciples because his preceptor, Bābā Farīd, had allowed it, it can be inferred that Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn had some personal reservations to the practice. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 364.

¹²⁹ For details, see Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, pp. 157-59. However, Nizami informs that the Shaykh permitted kissing of feet. Saiyyid Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī Makhdūm-i Jahānīyaq, *Sirāj al-Hidāyah*, MS, Personal Collection of K. A. Nizami, as cited in Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, p. 108. It is important to bear in mind that prostration before a Shaykh and feet-kissing can easily be differentiated. Cf. the statement of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn permitting prostration of respect before a Shaykh in *Miftāḥ al-'Ashiqīn*, in *Hasht Bahisht*, p. 3. However, it must be remembered that *Miftāḥ al-'Ashiqīn* is considered to be an apocryphal work attributed to Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd.

¹³⁰ Lawrence, *Notes from a Distant Flute*, p. 25.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, p. 88.

shown to the graves of the Sufis, which was also condemned by Imām Ibn Taymiyyah.¹³³ However, unlike the Imām, the Shaykh did not disapprove of the practice of visiting graves.¹³⁴

Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn tried to counter the views of Ibn Taymiyyah in many respects. Nevertheless, on some important issues, their approach converged as well. Regarding their views on the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn agreed with Ibn Taymiyyah, as they both vehemently rejected the doctrine, and thus, differed with Ibn al-‘Arabī.¹³⁵ Leaving aside the theological and philosophical content of the Shaykh’s views, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn must have been mindful of the adverse repercussions of the Doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* on the Indian society. It is worthy of mention that after the demise of the Shaykh, the adverse repercussions of the said Doctrine were manifested by the cases of Shaykh Aḥmad Bihārī, Shaykh ‘Izz al-Dīn Kākvi, and Malik ‘Ayn al-Mulk Māhrō’s freedman or ex-slave, who were accused of raising the slogan of *anā al-Ḥaqq* by the state, and were punished.

Thus, one can clearly discern that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn’s approach was marked by strict conformity and adherence to *Shari‘ah* in matters pertaining to Sufism. The Shaykh not only tried to counter the influence of the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah in India, he also attempted to curtail the excesses of Sufism by bringing it closer and in conformity to

¹³³ Ibn Taymiyyah wrote a book titled *Ziyārat al-Qubūr* to condemn the practice of visitation of graves. For a brief summary of his views, see Idem, *Kitāb al-Wasilah*, pp. 33, 46-48, 122-28, 212-14, and Idem, *Ṣirāt-i Mustaqīm kē Taqāḍē*, pp. 86-89, 92-94, 109-14, 146-47.

¹³⁴ Qalandar, *Khair-u’l-Majalis*, p. 157.

¹³⁵ For a detailed analysis of the views of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn and Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, see Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India*, pp. 88-90.

Shari'ah as well. The approach of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd can be interpreted as a conscious effort on his part to bridge the yawning gulf between the *Shari'ah* and *ṭariqah* or Sufism, and reconcile the jurists and the Sufis. Moreover, his approach may also be seen as an attempt to put one's own house in order for pre-empting any possible critique from the '*ulamā*', particularly those who were critical of Sufi doctrines and practices and were also holding official positions in the Sultanate of Delhi. Moreover, the Shaykh was extremely aware of the decline of Sufi institutions in the Sultanate, and more noticeably in Delhi, and the prevalence of many practices in the Sufi circles, which clearly contradicted the norms of the society as well as the injunctions of the *Shari'ah*. The Shaykh's approach seems to be marked by balance, and an urge to find a middle way between the contradictory influences of the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-'Arabī in India. However, it would be erroneous to equate Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn's approach and views with those of his contemporary '*ulamā*', with whom he had differences of opinion.¹³⁶

Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn seems to have been motivated by a desire to preserve the independent space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Sultanate of Delhi. He did not want to give any excuse to the state-allied '*ulamā*' to object to the doctrines and practices of the Chishtīs, and thus, interfere with their affairs. Nonetheless, the approach of the Shaykh cannot be interpreted as situational or a compromise, as his approach and ideas were not merely in response to his contemporary intellectual environment. The Shaykh's personal disposition and religious orientation seems to have been largely responsible for shaping his distinct approach.

¹³⁶ For instance, see Mawlānā Muḡhīth's incident in Ḥusaynī, *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*, p. 337.

6.4 Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī and Sultan Fīrūz

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī was an eminent *khalīfah* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', and a descendant of Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn of Hānsī.¹³⁷ As discussed above, while marching from Thatta to Delhi, when the royal camp, along with the army, reached Sarswati, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn told Sultan Fīrūz that from Sarswatī onwards was the spiritual domain of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī. Hence, the Sultan sent a message to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, who prayed for his victory.¹³⁸ Such an incident must have increased the Sultan's respect for, and faith in, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn.

Historical evidence suggests that once Sultan Fīrūz met Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar in Hānsī, and the Shaykh boldly criticized some of the habits of the Sultan. 'Afif informs that on his way to Delhi from Thatta, the Sultan went to Hānsī to see Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn at his *khānqāh*. When the Sultan reached there, the Shaykh was leaving for the mosque to attend the Friday prayers. The Sultan shook hands with the Shaykh, who exclaimed that since he had come out of the *khānqāh* for the Friday prayers, how could he go back to his *khānqāh*? 'Afif interprets the Shaykh's utterance as suggesting that the Shaykh politely informed the Sultan that the latter should not have

¹³⁷ Both Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar were the *khulafā'* of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'. They were granted the *khirqah*, a symbol of spiritual succession, by their preceptor the same day. Since Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn had been granted the *khirqah* at *chāshī* (immediately after sunrise) time, and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn at *zuhr* (midday) prayer, the latter asked the former to lead the prayer. They both had very cordial and friendly relations, and they both used to attend the *samā'* gatherings together. Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 248-49, 255-56 and 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 65.

¹³⁸ 'Afif, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), pp. 49-50.

come before the Friday prayers. However, the Shaykh advised the Sultan as such: "First, I have heard that the Sultan excessively indulges in drinking. It creates problems for the aggrieved in getting their grievances redressed. God Almighty has entrusted the Muslims to your care. It is not wise to be ignorant of the problems of the people." Upon hearing this, the Sultan promised to give up drinking. Then the Shaykh said to the Sultan: "I have heard that the Sultan is excessively fond of hunting. It causes undue trouble to a large number of the Sultan's servants. Moreover, hunting should not be merely for the purpose of seeking pleasure. That much hunting is lawful which suffices ones need." Upon hearing this, the Sultan asked the Shaykh to pray to God to prevent him from it, which suggests that the Sultan showed hesitation in giving his pledge to give up hunting. The Shaykh got displeased by the Sultan's behaviour, and immediately left for the mosque. After the prayers, the Sultan sent a robe to the Shaykh, who refused to accept it, as it was made of a material not permissible for use according to the *Shari'ah*. When the Sultan was apprised of it, he sent his apologies to the Shaykh.¹³⁹

It appears that when the Sultan personally met the Shaykh, the former did not present any cash offering or land grant to the latter. The historical sources are silent in this regard, but if the Sultan had brought anything for the Shaykh, he would have presented it. Probably, the Sultan knew the Shaykh's strict adherence to the Chishti ideals as well as his force of character, and therefore, the Sultan did not even try to offer anything to him. On the contrary, the Sultan had awarded land grants and stipends to

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp. 62-64.

other descendants of Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn of Hānsī, who seems to have accepted these favours unhesitatingly.¹⁴⁰

To sum up, when the Sultan's messengers from Sarsatī came to Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar to seek his prayers, he prayed for the Sultan's victory. Next, when the Sultan himself came to see him, apparently without any prior notice, the Shaykh did not lose the opportunity to give good counsel to the Sultan, but at the same time, the attitude of the Shaykh indicated that the Sultan was not welcome in the future. Moreover, the Shaykh also tried not to needlessly antagonize his relationship with the Sultan as well, though the former had got displeased by the behaviour of the latter. In this way, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn tried to preserve the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* by adhering to the Chishtī ideals of detachment from the state.

Section III Sultan Fīrūz and the Descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs: Negotiating the Space of the *Silsilah*

While the Chishtī Shaykhs such as Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar tried to preserve the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* by adhering to the age-old Chishtī ideals, the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs in different Chishtī centres tried to negotiate this space with the political authorities by readjusting and/or redefining the limits of the independent space of the *Silsilah*. While critically examining Sultan Fīrūz's policy of conciliation towards the Sufis, and reviving the Sufī institutions, his relationship with the descendants of the eminent Chishtī Shaykhs and the impact of

¹⁴⁰ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 538-39.

his policies on the Chishtī *Silsilah* will also be explored and assessed in the ensuing discussion.

6.5 Fīrūz's Policy towards the Descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs: An Appraisal

While discussing Sultan Fīrūz's policy of conciliation of the Sufīs and revival of Sufi institutions, it has been pointed out that on his way to Delhi from Thatta, the Sultan had visited the tombs of many Sufi Shaykhs, including the Chishtīs, and had also restored stipends and land grants of many people. According to Baranī, the three important Chishtī centres where the Sultan went were Uch, Dīpālpur and Hānsī. In Uch, Sultan Fīrūz tried to revive the *khānqāh* of Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn, a *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd. The Sultan not only restored the land grants to the Shaykh's sons, he also granted them stipends.¹⁴¹ Similarly, in Dīpālpur, the Sultan visited the tomb of Bābā Farīd, and reorganized his descendants. The land grants of the family and the stipends of the family-members were restored. The grandsons of Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn, the grandson of Bābā Farīd, were granted robes of honour by the Sultan.¹⁴² In Hānsī, the third important Chishtī centre, the Sultan also visited the *khānqāhs* of Sufis.¹⁴³ However, Baranī does not mention the name of any Sufi Shaykh whom the Sultan met in Hānsī. It seems probable that the Sultan did not meet Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar in Hānsī during this visit, but met the Shaykh later on.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 538-39.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 543.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

¹⁴⁴ 'Afīf, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), pp. 62-64.

A number of inferences can be drawn from this scanty information provided by Baranī's account. It reveals that the Sultan granted land grants and stipends to the families and descendants of Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn and Bābā Farīd, so that they could maintain the *khānqāhs* of their ancestors. However, in Hānsī, where Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar lived in his *khānqāh*, it seems that the Sultan did not try to offer any grant. It shows that Sultan Fīrūz considered state intervention and support necessary for the revival of the Sufi *khānqāhs*, which had been ruined during the previous regime, and were not headed by any Sufi Shaykh, but were largely under the supervision of their families and descendants. However, it was not the case with the *khānqāh* of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn in Hānsī, which was headed by the Shaykh himself. The Sultan did not pay any significant attention to his contemporary living Chishtī Shaykhs like Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar, who were already maintaining their own *khānqāhs*. It shows that the conciliation of the Sultan was selective; probably he knew that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn would not compromise the Chishtī ideals by accepting the state grants and other official favours. Contrary to the Chishtī Shaykhs, the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs of the past were happy to become the beneficiaries of the state, unlike their own ancestors, who had never accepted land grants from the state. In this way, the Chishtī ideals were compromised by some of the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs.

The above discussion raises some important questions: what prompted Sultan Fīrūz to turn to the descendants of the Sufi Shaykhs, and not to his contemporary living Sufi Shaykhs? Could the efforts of the Sultan successfully revive the declining Sufi

institutions? Could the Chishtī traditions and principles be revived by state support? After getting grants from the state and becoming state beneficiaries, could the descendants of the eminent Chishtī Shaykhs be expected to revive the Sufi institutions and the Chishtī principles of detachment from politics, world-renunciation and austerity?

Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq turned to the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs as they commanded tremendous respect and enjoyed social prestige in the eyes of the people. Studying the relationship of the Chishtīs with the political authorities, Ernst and Lawrence observe: "If most royal support was directed at the shrines of deceased masters rather than the circles of living teachers, it was probably because the rulers remained at heart pragmatists: They foresaw more benefits and fewer conflicts with dead saints than with living exemplars."¹⁴⁵ Moreover, while doing so, Sultan Fīrūz had a precedent before him. It seems useful to recall that in the previous reign, his predecessor, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, had also turned to the descendants of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī of Nāgaur and Bābā Farīd. The descendents of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn were given important administrative positions in the Nāgaur region.¹⁴⁶ Apart from accepting government service, Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn of Nāgaur, a descendant of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn, also accepted a grant of villages from Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. With that money, the Shaykh was able to possess a large establishment. It was during his time that the wall around the tomb of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn was constructed by Sultan Muḥammad

¹⁴⁵ Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁶ Rizvi, *A History of Sufism*, vol. I, p. 130.

ibn Tughluq.¹⁴⁷ The Sultan was not content with it; he married one of his daughters to a descendant of Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn as well.¹⁴⁸

The Tughluq Sultans also held the descendants of Bābā Farīd in great reverence, as Dīpālpur, which was the home of the founder of the dynasty, was not far from Ajōdhan or Pākpatan.¹⁴⁹ Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq held the family of Bābā Farīd in high esteem. Among the grandsons of Bābā Farīd, Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn of Ajōdhan (son of Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Sulaymān and the grandson of Bābā Farīd) was an eminent Sufi, who was a contemporary of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.¹⁵⁰ So great was his prestige, that even if a criminal sought shelter in his *khānqāh*, the state officials did not dare arrest him.¹⁵¹ Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn was known for his austerity as well as indifference towards the political power. The Sultan is said to have entered the fold of his discipleship as well.¹⁵² The Sultan also built a grand mausoleum of the Shaykh, within the premises of the shrine of Bābā Farīd.¹⁵³ Nonetheless, other grandsons of Bābā Farīd were not like Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn.

During the reign of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, the descendants of Bābā Farīd joined the service of the state. The sons and grandsons of Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn were appointed at high official positions by the Sultan. Shaykh Mu‘izz al-Dīn, the son of

¹⁴⁷ Siddiqui, “Chishti Dargahs”, in *Muslim Shrines in India*, ed. Troll, p. 14.

¹⁴⁸ Farīd al-Dīn Maḥmūd, *Surūr al-Ṣudūr*, MS, as cited in Nizāmī, *Salāṭīn-i Dehlī kē Madhhabī Rujhānāt*, p. 353.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Aḥf, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, (Tālib), p. 23; see also M. Abdullah Chaghatai, *Pakpatan and Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar* (Lahore: Kitābkhānah Nauras, 1968), p. 28.

¹⁵⁰ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 414.

¹⁵¹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 196.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 196. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah has mistakenly written the name of Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn (Bābā Farīd) instead of his grandson, Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. *Idem*, ‘*Ajā’ib al-Asfār*’, p. 34.

¹⁵³ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 196.

Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, was entrusted some administrative responsibility in Gujrat.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, Shaykh Mu‘izz al-Dīn’s brother, Shaykh ‘Alam al-Dīn, was conferred the official title of *Shaykh al-Islām* and was entrusted with the task of supervision of the Sufi establishments.¹⁵⁵ After the demise of Shaykh ‘Alam al-Dīn, his son, Shaykh Maẓhar al-Dīn, was elevated to the position of *Shaykh al-Islām*.¹⁵⁶ In this way, the descendants of Bābā Farīd served at high official positions under Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. One may argue that probably the descendants of Bābā Farīd accepted grants and titles from Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq under some pressure, but during the reign of Sultan Fīrūz, there was no such pressure from the state. The descendants of Bābā Farīd willingly accepted lavish grants from the state again.

Coming back to Sultan Fīrūz, while turning to the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs of the past, he must have the historical precedent of his predecessor in mind. However, the purpose of both the Sultans might have been different. Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq had sought the support of the family of Bābā Farīd for personal as well as political reasons. Being a disciple of Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, whose entire family the Sultan greatly revered, the Sultan conferred titles on the Shaykh’s son and grandson. Moreover, the Sultan wanted to employ the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis in the state services, and thus, he appointed some of them on high administrative posts as well. In addition, the Sultan might have also tried to secure the support of the ‘*ulamā*’ and the Sufis for enhancing the

¹⁵⁴ There was unrest in the region, and Shaykh Mu‘izz al-Dīn was killed during the rebellion of Malik Ṭaghī in Gujrat. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 508, 518, and Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 196.

¹⁵⁵ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 196.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

legitimacy of his regime, which had been greatly undermined owing to some of his unsuccessful state policies.

On the contrary, Sultan Fīrūz had no such crisis of legitimacy in the Sultanate. The interpretation of Baranī and ‘Afif that the Sultan’s measures were aimed at the revival of the Sufis *khānqāhs* appears credible as well as plausible. The Sultan seems to be motivated by a desire to revitalize the *khānqāhī* system in northern India, which was fading away. Though he had correctly identified the malaise, the measures he undertook for its cure were, nevertheless, erroneous. It seems that the Sultan had failed to realize that a living Sufi Shaykh is the centre of gravity in a *khānqāh*, which cannot flourish with mere provision of material resources. Running a *khānqāh* with other institutions like *langar*, was not as important as the presence of a Sufi Shaykh at the head of it. Among the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs, there were no Sufis of very high spiritual caliber except for Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn of Ajōdhan and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī.

The policy of Sultan Fīrūz towards the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs adversely affected the Chishtī *Silsilah*. The state support to the Chishtī *khānqāhs* and the Sultan’s personal attention to the families and descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs enhanced their social prestige as well as religious authority in the eyes of the common people, who mistook these descendants by lineage for the spiritual successors of the Chishtī Shaykhs, who were actually their *khulafā’*, and not their sons and grandsons. The contemporary historians and hagiographers such as Baranī, ‘Afif and Amīr Khūrd could not differentiate between the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs by lineage, and their

true spiritual successors. Ironically enough, Baranī was a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā',¹⁵⁷ 'Afīf was a disciple of a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī,¹⁵⁸ while Amīr Khūrd had entered the fold of the discipleship of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', after whose demise he performed *bay'at* at the hands of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd.¹⁵⁹ Despite being the disciples of eminent Chishtī Shaykhs, they were not generally classed as Sufis, and not expected to fully comply with the true principles of the Chishtī *Silsilah*.

Organizing the families of the descendants of the Sufī Shaykhs of the past, and bestowing land and cash grants upon them for the maintenance and upkeep of the Chishtī *khānqāhs* only apparently revived the *khānqāhs*, which were once again inhabited by the people. Nonetheless, the state measures failed to revive the true spirit of Sufism or its principles among the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs. On the contrary, the state measures, which were initially aimed at the revival of the *khānqāhs*, proved counter-productive in the long run, as they proved harmful for the autonomous functioning of the Chishtī *Silsilah*. By becoming the beneficiaries of the state and identifying themselves with the regime, the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs had compromised the Chishtī ideals and traditions. In other words, these descendants tried to negotiate and redefine the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Sultanate of Delhi.

In the previous reign, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq had tried to bring the Sufis within the ambit of the state, which proved harmful for the Sufis and their institutions.

¹⁵⁷ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, p. 109.

¹⁵⁸ 'Afīf, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), p. 98.

¹⁵⁹ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, p. 103.

During the reign of Sultan Fīrūz, attempts were made to put things right and compensate the damage done to the Sufi institutions. Again the state intervention or state interference was considered to be a panacea, which, in fact, proved counter-productive for Sufism in general, and the Chishtī *Silsilah* in particular. It would have been better if the Sufis had been left to their own devices. It must be remembered that the Chishtī *Silsilah* had flourished in the Sultanate of Delhi in the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century without the support of the state. Nonetheless, the policy of Fīrūz Tughluq to placate the Sufis and revive the Sufi institutions by extending state support to them strengthened the institution of *sajjādah*. But before discussing the concept of *sajjādah* and the practice of *sajjādah-nashīnī* in the Chishtī circles, it is necessary to briefly review and analyze the various patterns of spiritual succession among the Chishtīs.

6.6 Spiritual Succession Patterns of the Chishtīs

The issue of spiritual succession is quite crucial in Sufism. Generally, the Sufi Shaykhs used to grant *khilāfat* to a few of their disciples, and thus, authorize them to enroll disciples and disseminate the teachings of their *silsilah*. However, the criterion for the granting of *khilāfat* to a disciple was his spiritual excellence. Then, from among the *khulafā'*, one was designated as the principal spiritual successor. Again, spiritually the most accomplished *khalīfah* succeeded a Shaykh as the next head or leader of his *silsilah*. Nevertheless, the disciples of a Sufi Shaykh at times included their own sons, grandsons or sons-in-law, and on occasions they also spiritually succeeded their fathers, grandfathers or fathers-in-law, but their spiritual succession was based on their spiritual excellence, and not on the grounds of their blood, lineage or matrimonial/familial

relationship. On the contrary, the political institution of kingship among the Muslims had largely been based on the principle of hereditary succession. The Sufis seemed to have challenged that principle in a subtle way, and based succession in spiritual affairs on principles, which stood in sharp contrast to the principle of hereditary succession.

Among the early Chishtīs of Persia, one comes across both types of succession patterns, that is, when a disciple spiritually succeeded his preceptor and when a disciple-son was designated as a spiritual successor. However, in both the cases, merit had prevailed. Khwājah Abū Ishāq Shāmī, the first Chishtī, who was a disciple of Khwājah ‘Alū Dīnawarī, was succeeded by his most accomplished disciple, Khwājah Abū Aḥmad ibn Farasnafah Chishtī. Khwājah Abū Aḥmad was, however, succeeded by his son Khwājah Abū Muḥammad Chishtī,¹⁶⁰ who was in turn succeeded by his son Khwājah Abū Yūsuf Chishtī.¹⁶¹ Khwājah Abū Yūsuf was succeeded by his son Khwājah Mawdūd Chishtī.¹⁶² Nonetheless, Khwājah Mawdūd’s spiritual successor, Ḥājī Sharīf Zandānī, was not his son or relative. Similarly, Ḥājī Sharīf’s successor, Khwājah ‘Uthmān Hārwanī, was also not related to his preceptor through lineage.

After the introduction of Chishtī *Silsilah* in India by Khwājah ‘Uthmān Hārwanī’s spiritual successor or *khalīfah*, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer, there is no instance of a son or a grandson or a close relative becoming the principal spiritual

¹⁶⁰ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 213, and *Anwār-i Aṣfiyā*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁶¹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 213. However, according to *Safīnat al-Awliyā* and *Anwār-i Aṣfiyā*, Khwājah Abū Yūsuf Chishtī was the nephew of Khwājah Abū Muḥammad Chishtī. Dārā Shikōh, *Safīnat al-Awliyā*, p. 125, and *Anwār-i Aṣfiyā*, pp. 96.

¹⁶² Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā*, p. 213, Dārā Shikōh, *Safīnat al-Awliyā*, p. 125, and *Anwār-i Aṣfiyā*, pp. 96, 112.

successor of a Chishtī Shaykh during the period under study, that is, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Shaykhs in the main line of the Chishtī leadership, that is, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn, Bābā Farīd, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn and Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn, were not related to their preceptors through lineage. In fact, two of them, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ and his principal spiritual successor, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, never married, and thus remained celibate throughout their lives. On the contrary, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Ajmeri, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Suwālī, and Bābā Farīd were married, and had off-springs as well. These Chishtī Shaykhs did not appoint any of their descendants (son or grandson) as their spiritual successors or *khulafā’*. Nonetheless, quite contrarily, the practice of hereditary succession was prevalent among the Suhrawardīs in India during the said period. Shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakarīyyā of Multan was succeeded by his son, Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn ‘Ārif, who was in turn succeeded by his son, Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Faṭḥ of Multan.¹⁶³

The Chishtī Shaykhs in India seemed to be very mindful of the critical issues pertaining to spiritual succession. They explicitly rejected the notion of hereditary succession in spiritual affairs, and expressed their views in an unambiguous and unequivocal manner in this regard. Once Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ narrated an incident to his disciples and devotees in his *jamā’ atkhānah*, that there was a certain Sufi Shaykh in Ghaznah, who appointed his slave named Zīrak as his spiritual successor before his death. Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn further added that the Shaykh had four sons, who wanted the successor to be selected from amongst themselves, but the Shaykh did not

¹⁶³ Haq, “The Suhrawardis”, pp. 78, 87.

appoint any one of them as his *khalīfah*.¹⁶⁴ On another occasion, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' told his disciples and devotees that Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī had two sons, but his real son was Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn,¹⁶⁵ his principal spiritual successor. On a similar occasion, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' told his disciples that once he was sitting with Bābā Farīd and his son, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn, who served in the army. Pointing towards them, Bābā Farīd said: "You both are my sons. You [Niẓām al-Dīn, the warrior] are my 'son of the bread' (*farzand-i nānī*), and you [Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'] are my 'son of the soul' (*farzand-i jānī* or *rūhī*)."¹⁶⁶ Here Bābā Farīd implied that Niẓām al-Dīn was his successor by lineage, but Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' was his spiritual successor. A similar statement by Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn of Ajmer has been recorded in *Saba' Sanābil*, when the Khwājah talked about his *sons*, and upon inquiring from the people, the Khwājah clarified that by his sons, he meant his *khulafā'* or his *farzandān-i ma'anwī* (spiritual successors).¹⁶⁷

These statements clearly show that according to the Chishtī Shaykhs, lineage by birth was insignificant as compared to spiritual succession, as the *khulafā'* were considered the real successors of their preceptors. It is worthy of mention that all the Chishtī Shaykhs from Shaykh Mu'īn al-Dīn to Khwājah Gēsūdirāz, who assumed the leadership of the *Silsilah* as principal spiritual successors of their preceptors, were Saiyyids, that is, descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). However, they never

¹⁶⁴ For details, see Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 5-6. For a similar incident narrated by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn in his *majlis*, see Jāndār, *Durr-i Niẓāmī*, MS, as cited in Aslam, *Malfūzātī Adab kī Tārikhī Aḥammīyyat*, p. 67.

¹⁶⁵ Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 105.

¹⁶⁶ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 222-23.

¹⁶⁷ Bilgrāmī, *Saba' Sanābil*, p. 436.

used the title with their names, and instead preferred to be addressed by the title Shaykh, which emphasized their spiritual status as Sufi masters rather than illustrious ancestry.¹⁶⁸

It is important to note that often the sons of the Chishtī Shaykhs were not worthy of receiving spiritual succession. As pointed out in the third chapter, Shaykh Mu‘īn al-Dīn Ajmeri’s sons had accepted a land grant from the state.¹⁶⁹ The sons of the Shaykh lacked the qualities and characteristics of their father, and so none of them could spiritually succeed their illustrious father. Therefore, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn nominated Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī as his principal spiritual successor. Similarly, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* informs that Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī had two sons. One of them died in infancy, whereas the other was unworthy of his father.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn appointed Bābā Farīd as his principal spiritual successor. In the same way, Bābā Farīd’s sons were also not inclined towards Sufism, and he selected Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’ as his next spiritual successor. As for Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’ and his spiritual successor, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, they both remained celibate throughout their lives, and had no families and descendants as mentioned earlier.

So only the first three Indian Chishtī Shaykhs, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Ajmeri, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Bābā Farīd, had descendants. Nonetheless, among them, only the descendants of Bābā Farīd received prominence in the Delhi Sultanate, as they were approached by the Sultans of Delhi and they also enjoyed popular

¹⁶⁸ Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 66.

¹⁶⁹ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 53.

¹⁷⁰ Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 42. It was on this occasion that Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’ had said that Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī’s real son was Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, pp. 104-5.

respect and devotion. As for the family of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, it remained in obscurity, whereas the family of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer received popular attention later on. Nonetheless, the practice of appointing *sajjādah-nashīns* or hereditary successors to the *sajjādah* was, and is still, prevalent among the descendants of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer and Bābā Farīd.

6.7 ‘Inherited Spirituality’? *Sajjādah-nashīnī* in the Chishtīs

The concepts of *sajjādah*, often mistakenly translated as ‘spiritual seat’, *sajjādah-nashīn* (literally, the one who sits on or succeeds to the *sajjādah*; hereditary custodian of a Sufi shrine), and the practice of *sajjādah-nashīnī* (hereditary succession for the custodianship of a Sufi shrine) among the Chishtīs, particularly among the descendants of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer and Bābā Farīd, merit some discussion. Before analyzing the phenomenon of *sajjādah-nashīnī* in the Chishtīs, it is necessary to explore its meaning and trace the historical roots of the concept of *sajjādah*.

The Persian and Urdu word *sajjādah*¹⁷¹ has been derived from an Arabic word *sujjādah*, which is used to refer to a prayer-mat, throne, or a seat.¹⁷² The term *sajjādah* has often been used in a symbolic sense to denote authority as well. Thus, the term is used both in its literal sense as well as in its symbolic connotation. Nonetheless, the translation of the term *sajjādah* into English as ‘the spiritual seat’ is far from satisfactory.

¹⁷¹ *Sajjādah* is also referred to as *gaddī* (literally meaning a throne or seat of authority), and thus, *sajjādah-nashīn* are also referred to as *gaddī-nashīn*. However, the terms *gaddī* and *gaddī-nashīn* seemed to have been coined at a later stage.

¹⁷² ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Sa‘īd, and Munīr, *Lughāt-i Sa‘īdī*, p. 402. Sarah F. D. Ansari has understood *sajjādah* as ‘carpet’, as she has translated *sajjādah-nashīn* in literal sense as the ‘one who sits on the carpet’, and the ‘head of *pīr* family’ in general sense. Idem, *Sufi Saints and State Power*, see glossary, p. xviii.

Such a translation confuses the concept of *sajjādah-nashīnī* with the *khilāfat*, i.e. spiritual succession, and that of *sajjādah-nashīn* with the *khalīfah*, i.e. the spiritual successor. While using the semantic construct of ‘spiritual seat’, one is likely to assume that all the *sajjādah-nashīns* were necessarily spiritually endowed or spiritually gifted individuals, whereas as a matter of fact, it was not a prerequisite for *sajjādah-nashīnī*. So a *sajjādah-nashīn* is a hereditary custodian of a Sufī Shaykh, and the former is related to the latter through ties of lineal descent.

As far as the historical roots of the concept of *sajjādah* are concerned, the term *sajjādah* is commonly found in the fourteenth-century historical and hagiographical texts. For instance, in his *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, Baranī refers to *sajjādah* in the context of Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, the grandson of Bābā Farīd, and Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn, the grandson of Shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakarīyyā.¹⁷³ Similarly, ‘Afīf also refers to *sajjāda-i tarīqat* in his *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī* in the sense of spiritual succession.¹⁷⁴ In a likewise manner, the concept of *sajjādah* finds frequent mention in Amīr Khūrd’s *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, particularly in the context of the family and descendants of Bābā Farīd.¹⁷⁵ It can be inferred from these three historical and hagiographical texts that in the fourteenth-century India, the term *sajjādah* was being used in two senses: first, for spiritual succession among the Sufīs; and secondly, for the practice of hereditary succession among them.

¹⁷³ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 347. It is important to bear in mind that Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn was not a spiritual successor or *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd, whereas Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn was the grandson as well as the spiritual successor of his father and grandfather.

¹⁷⁴ For instance, see ‘Afīf, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (Ṭālib), pp. 37, 98.

¹⁷⁵ See, for instance, Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 188-89, 191, 193-94, 197. In addition to the discussion on Bābā Farīd’s family and descendants, Amīr Khūrd also uses the concept of *sajjādah* for explaining the spiritual succession among the pre-Indian Chishtīs. However, here the usage of the concept of *sajjādah* suggests that it has been used in the sense of *khilāfat*. See pp. 212-13.

Though the concepts of *sajjādah* and *khilāfat*, or *sajjādah-nashīn* and *khalīfah* have been used interchangeably in various texts, the identification of these two concepts is mistaken, and hence, these need to be differentiated. As opposed to the concept of *sajjādah*, the concept of *khilāfat* and the related practice of granting *khilāfat* to a disciple by his preceptor entail that a disciple is authorized by his preceptor to enroll further disciples in his *silsilah*, and thus, disseminate the teachings and traditions of his preceptors and his *silsilah*.

After having explored the meaning and the historical roots of the concept of *sajjādah*, it seems pertinent to discuss and analyze the phenomenon of *sajjādah-nashīn* in the Chishtīs. In the family of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer, one comes across the recurrent practice of appointing *sajjādah-nashīn*,¹⁷⁶ whereby the descendants of the Khwājah were designated one after another as the guardian of their ancestor’s shrine in Ajmer. Hagiographical sources inform that Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer had three sons: one of them, Shaykh Ḥussām al-Dīn, had disappeared, while the other two were Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn and Shaykh Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Abū Sa‘īd. The eldest son, Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn,¹⁷⁷ assumed the *sajjādah* after his father’s demise. After the demise of Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn, his brother, Shaykh Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Abū Sa‘īd, succeeded him. After Shaykh Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn, two grandsons of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer named Shaykh Rafī‘al-

¹⁷⁶ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 44-45, and Begg, *The Holy Biography of Hazrat Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti*, pp. 161-63. The genealogical list of the *sajjādah-nashīn*s of Ajmer in Begg informs that Saiyyid ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, the fifteenth *sajjādah-nashīn*, assumed the title of *Dīwān* for the first time. p. 162.

¹⁷⁷ Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn used to cultivate land in Māndan near Ajmer, and it was on his insistence that his father had visited Delhi in order to get the relevant documents. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 44, 46, 130. However, the account seems apocryphal. See detailed discussion in chap. 3, pp. 228-32 (supra).

Dīn Bā-Yazīd and Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad became *sajjādah-nashīns* one after another.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, these *sajjādah-nashīns* were never approached by the Sultans of Delhi, especially the Tughluq Sultans, but they enjoyed the patronage of the Sultans of other independent kingdoms in the fifteenth century. Later, they enjoyed the patronage of the Mughal rulers as well.¹⁷⁹ It is important to mention that there existed jealousy and competitiveness among the descendants of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer for getting political favours.¹⁸⁰

Here it is important to note that these descendants of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn of Ajmer do not find any mention in important hagiographical texts of the fourteenth century such as *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* or *Siyar al-Awliyā'*. According to Currie, the descendants of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn are mentioned in a seventeenth-century hagiographical work, *Siyar al-Aqtāb*, written by Allāh Diyā Chishtī in 1647, but even then there is no mention of their being appointed as *sajjādah-nashīns*. The information that Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn's son, Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn, was made the *sajjādah-nashīn* of Ajmer after his father's demise finds mention in *Hasht Bahisht*, which is an apocryphal

¹⁷⁸ Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn's son, Shaykh Ḥussām al-Dīn *Sōkhtāh* (literally meaning the burnt one, burnt in the love of God), who was named by his father after the name of his disappeared brother, was known for his piety and austerity. He was a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'. His son, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn the Younger, named after his great grandfather, was a *khalīfah* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. See details in Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, pp. 32-33, and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, pp. 119-22.

¹⁷⁹ Owing to the weakening of the central authority, in 1400, Ajmer was annexed by Hindu rulers, and the descendants of the Khwājah were forced to migrate from Ajmer. They took shelter under the independent Muslim Sultans of Gurjat and Mālwah (Māndū), who held them in high esteem. Later, Ajmer was captured by Sultan Maḥmūd Khaljī of Māndū. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 52-53. See further details of *sajjādah-nashīns* of Ajmer to the present day in Begg, *The Holy Biography of Hazrat Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti*, pp. 163-80, and Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'īn al-dīn Chishtī of Ajmer*, pp. 150-163, also see the details of endowments, offerings, income of the *sajjādah-nashīns*, remuneration of other officials, and expenditure of the *dargāh*, pp. 174-84.

¹⁸⁰ See details in Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 34.

collection of the *malfūzāt* of the early Chishtī Shaykhs of India. Currie further observes that it is unlikely that the first *sajjādah-nashīn*, was buried in the town of Sarwar, and not within the premises of the *dargāh* of Ajmer.¹⁸¹ Similarly, *Gulzār-i Abrār* and *Akhbār al-Akhyār* are also seventeenth and eighteenth century accounts respectively. So the practice of appointing the son and grandson of Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn as *sajjādah-nashīns* seems to be a latter-day fabrication as its historical authenticity is dubious.

As for the descendants of Bābā Farīd, Amīr Khūrd informs that he had five sons, and three daughters.¹⁸² After the demise of Bābā Farīd, his son, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Sulaymān (d. 1281), sat on the *sajjādah* of his father with the consent of his brothers and other disciples of his father.¹⁸³ So Shaykh Badr al-Dīn remained the *sajjādah-nashīn* for almost sixteen years, i.e. from 1265 to 1281. The major rituals at the shrine had become instituted during these years. These included the ritual of *dastārbandī* or ‘tying on of the turban’, which corresponded to the succession ceremony at the royal court in Delhi.¹⁸⁴ Shaykh Badr al-Dīn was succeeded by his son. Thus began the practice of perpetual succession to the *sajjādah* in Ajōdhan, which became a tradition continuing to date.¹⁸⁵

Amīr Khūrd further informs about Shaykh Badr al-Dīn that he was not a disciple of his father, as he had entered the fold of discipleship of two Shaykhs of Chisht,

¹⁸¹ Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu‘īn al-dīn Chishtī of Ajmer*, p. 150.

¹⁸² For their biographical sketches, see Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, pp. 186-93.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹⁸⁴ Richard M. Eaton, “The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Bābā Farīd” in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 337, 339.

¹⁸⁵ See the list of *sajjādah-nashīns* of Bābā Farīd’s shrine in Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar*, Appendix D, “Sajjadah Nashins of Bābā Farīd’s Khanqah”, p. 123.

Khawājah Zōar and Khawājah Ghaur, at the behest of his father. Shaykh Badr al-Dīn had also received *khilāfat* from them.¹⁸⁶ After the demise of Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Sulaymān, his sixteen-year old son, Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, succeeded the *sajjādah* of his father. He remained the *sajjādah-nashīn* for the next fifty-four years till his death.¹⁸⁷ Amīr Khūrd records that he was known for his piety, godliness and austerity, but *Siyar al-Awliyā’* fails to mention whose disciple or *khalīfah* he was. However, the account does mention that when someone used to approach him for becoming his disciple, he used to ask his attendants to take him to the tomb of Bābā Farīd, and grant him a turban (*kullāh*) symbolizing discipleship.¹⁸⁸ Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn might have been spiritually associated with his grandfather, Bābā Farīd, and might have received spiritual guidance from him as well, but he succeeded his father as a *sajjādah-nashīn*. It is important to bear in mind that Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s father and grandfather were the successors and representatives of two different branches of Chishtī *Silsilah*. Amīr Khūrd further informs that after Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s demise, his son, Shaykh Mu‘izz al-Dīn, succeeded the *sajjādah* of Bābā Farīd.¹⁸⁹ Again the account fails to mention whose disciple he was. After the demise of Shaykh Mu‘izz al-Dīn, his son Shaykhzādah Mu‘azzam Afdal al-Dīn Fuḍayl was designated as the next *sajjādah-nashīn*.¹⁹⁰ The practice of appointing *sajjādah-nashīns* continued further and it still continues. The later *sajjādah-nashīns* came to be known as *Dīwāns* like the *sajjādah-nashīns* of Ajmer.

¹⁸⁶ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 189. Amīr Khūrd also informs that contrary to the practice of the Chishtī Shaykhs of India, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Sulaymān did not shave his head, and grew long locks. p. 188. See also ‘Abd al-Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, pp. 213-14.

¹⁸⁷ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā’*, p. 193.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

Leaving aside the inconsistencies in Amīr Khūrd's account,¹⁹¹ few important inferences can be drawn from it. The first *sajjādah-nashīn*, who was Bābā Farīd's own son, was not a disciple of Bābā Farīd. Though Bābā Farīd's son must have gained spiritual benefit from his father, he was the spiritual successor or the *khalīfah* of the Khwājahs of Chisht. He must have enrolled disciples in his own branch of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, rather than in his father's branch. Nizami observes that no contemporary or semi-contemporary authority refers to his having received *khilāfat* from his father.¹⁹² The account of Amīr Khūrd implies that over the generations, it had become less important whose disciple was the *sajjādah-nashīn*, or whether the *sajjādah-nashīn* was a *khalīfah* of a Sufī Shaykh or not, and the blood relationship with Bābā Farīd seems to have become more important than any other consideration. Amīr Khūrd's account suggests that his contemporary *sajjādah-nashīn*, Mu'azzam Afḍal al-Dīn Fuḍayl, was the first among the *sajjādah-nashīns* to assume the title of Shaykhzādah (literally meaning the son of a Shaykh), which implies a greater emphasis on lineage or ancestry instead of spirituality, piety or godliness.

The above discussion raises some important questions: According to the Chishtī tradition, what is *sajjādah per se*? Is the expression used to refer to some physical object such as a prayer-mat, or a seat or cot, or used in a mere symbolic sense? Did the *sajjādah-nashīn* inherit any object from their ancestors? As indicated earlier, the term

¹⁹¹ Amīr Khūrd confuses Khwājah Quṭb al-Dīn Chishtī with Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, though he refers to the same incident elsewhere in his hagiographical work with the correct name of the Khwājah. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-89, 212-13. The inconsistency in the account, which might be a mistake of the copyist, does not, however, mar the authenticity of the account.

¹⁹² Nonetheless, Nizami considers it a historiographical omission. *Idem, The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar*, p. 60, n.8.

sajjādah is generally used in the symbolic sense to refer to some kind of authority. An account in *Siyar al-Awliyā'* uses the term *sajjādah* for a physical object, placed in a room or cell.¹⁹³ The account mentions *sajjādah* as a sacred object symbolizing succession among the Chishtīs of Chisht (Persia). It is important here to recall the practice of granting the relics (*tabarrukāt*) of the Chishtī Shaykhs to one of the *khulafā'* after the demise of a Shaykh.¹⁹⁴ The selection of the recipient of the relics was, however, made by the Shaykh himself. This practice among the Chishtīs symbolized that one of the *khulafā'* was designated as the principal successor of the Shaykh. In this way, the *khalīfah* receiving the relics from his preceptor assumed leadership of the *Silsilah*. Generally, the relics included the *khirqah* (a patched cloak or robe), *muṣalla* (a prayer-mat), *kullāh* (a turban or cap), 'aṣā' (a staff) and wooden sandals of the Shaykh.¹⁹⁵ It is important to note that the regalia that were passed on to the principal successor of a Chishtī Shaykh included a prayer-mat. Thus, a *sajjādah-nashīn* cannot be an inheritor of the Shaykh's prayer-mat as far as the Indian Chishtīs are concerned. Moreover, the term *sajjādah-nashīn* cannot be understood in its literal sense as the one who sits on the *sajjādah*.

¹⁹³ See, for instance, Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 212-13.

¹⁹⁴ See a detailed discussion in Simon Digby, "Tabarrukat and Succession among the Great Chishti Shaykhs of the Delhi Sultanate", in *Delhi through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society*, ed. R. E. Frykenberg, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 63-103.

¹⁹⁵ For instance, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī was granted a turban and a cap (*kullāh wa dastār*), wooden staff ('aṣā), robe (*khirqah*), Quran, prayer mat (*jānamāz*), and wooden sandals (*n'alayn*) by his preceptor, Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Ajmerī. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, p. 32. Similarly, after Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī's demise, his *khalīfah*, Bābā Farīd, was granted his preceptor's *khirqah* along with other regalia such as prayer mat, staff and wooden sandals by Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī. In a similar manner, before his demise, Bābā Farīd asked his disciple and son-in-law, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq, to deliver the *khirqah* he (Bābā Farīd) had received from his preceptor to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn. As for other relics such as his prayer-mat and cap, Bābā Farīd had granted these to Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn during his life-time. Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 29, 58, 67.

Nevertheless, if a *sajjādah* is taken as a seat or cot of the Shaykh, the Chishtī Shaykhs in India did not include it in the list of the relics, which meant that it was not taken in a symbolic sense, like other regalia. Hagiographical accounts reveal that Bābā Farīd's relics including his patched robe, prayer mat, staff and turban were received by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā',¹⁹⁶ as Bābā Farīd had nominated him as his principal spiritual successor. According to the prevalent practice among the Chishtīs in India, these regalia did not include anything such as a seat or a cot. If these objects had been of any symbolic value, Bābā Farīd would have granted it to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn.

Coming back to the descendants of Bābā Farīd, hagiographical sources suggest that Bābā Farīd was not satisfied with the spirituality of his sons. That was why, once he expressed his wish to appoint his daughter Bibi Sharifah as his spiritual successor.¹⁹⁷ Keeping in view the prevalent traditions, however, Bābā Farīd refrained from appointing a woman as his spiritual successor. Amīr Khūrd informs that when Bābā Farīd was on his death-bed, the issue of his spiritual succession was raised by his disciples and sons. Amīr Khūrd's grandfather, Saiyyid Muḥammad Kirmānī (d. 1311), came to Ajōdhan from Delhi in order to see Bābā Farīd, but the latter's sons tried to prevent him from meeting their father. However, the Saiyyid went inside the cell and met Bābā Farīd. Amīr Khūrd records that his grandfather feared that the sons of Bābā Farīd would not like him

¹⁹⁶ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 123, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 58, 67.

¹⁹⁷ Bābā Farīd stated: "Had the succession of spiritual affairs been allowed to be granted to women, I would have appointed my daughter Bibi Sharifah as my successor. Had there been some more women like her, women would have been granted a superior status than men." Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, p. 191. The inference of Nizami from the statement of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd that Bābā Farīd once desired to make his son Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn as his spiritual successor appears to be incorrect. Nizami seems to have misinterpreted an incident narrated in *Khayr al-Majālis*. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar*, p. 63. See details of an incident narrated by Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn in this regard. Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majālis*, p. 224.

(Saiyyid Kirmānī) talking about Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' at that time. However, during conversation, the Saiyyid conveyed the regards of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' to Bābā Farīd. At that moment, Bābā Farīd entrusted all the articles of spiritual regalia to the Saiyyid, and instructed him to deliver them to Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', which indicated that Bābā Farīd had appointed the Shaykh as his principal spiritual successor. Amīr Khūrd further informs that since it was a great disappointment to the sons of Bābā Farīd, who were hoping to be designated as their father's spiritual successor, they furiously quarreled with Saiyyid Muḥammad Kirmānī for having deprived them of something precious.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, acting on the principle of "no hereditary succession in spiritual affairs", Bābā Farīd appointed his spiritually most-gifted *khalīfah*, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', as his principal successor, much to the chagrin of his own sons.

The account of Bābā Farīd's burial is also relevant here. It appears that Bābā Farīd had not specifically instructed his descendants about the place of his burial. After his demise, his family-members decided to bury him in the graveyard outside the wall of the city of Ajōdhan, where Bābā Farīd used to pray and meditate during his lifetime. However, Bābā Farīd's favourite son, Khwājah Niẓām al-Dīn, who was endowed with worldly wisdom by virtue of being in the military service of Ulugh Khān Balban, argued that if they buried the Shaykh outside the city, nobody would pay any attention to or have regard for the family of Bābā Farīd. The devotees visiting the tomb of Bābā Farīd would return without visiting them. Therefore, they decided to bury the Shaykh inside the city near his *jamā' atkhānah*.¹⁹⁹ It shows that the descendants of Bābā Farīd were conscious of

¹⁹⁸ Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 121-22.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

the fact that their ancestor was a great Sufi Shaykh, and they were also desirous of getting the same respect and devotion from the people which their illustrious ancestor received. Moreover, the possibility that the family of Bābā Farīd feared decrease in the amount of *futūḥ* in the *jamā'atkhānah* after his demise, cannot be ruled out. It was customary in those days, as prevalent nowadays as well, that the visitors to the shrines of the Sufi Shaykhs offered *futūḥ* in cash or in kind to the shrine-keepers. If the descendants of Bābā Farīd had buried him outside the city, it would have deprived them of enormous amount of *futūḥ* pouring into the *jamā'atkhānah*.

Another critical but relatively ignored, and thus, understudied issue pertaining to spiritual succession among the Chishtīs in India is that the *khulafā'*, including the principal successor, did not assume the directorship of a *khānqāh* or *jamā'atkhānah* after the demise of their preceptor. In other words, the spiritual successors did not 'inherit' the *jamā'atkhānah* from their preceptors, as the *jamā'atkhānah* was not a personal property of the Shaykh, nor of his descendants; rather it was communally owned by the people. The Chishtī practices in this regard reveal that the principal spiritual successors of the Chishtī Shaykhs did not live in the same place where their preceptors resided. In many cases, the spiritual successors were directed by their own preceptors to take residence at a specific place. For instance, Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī, who lived in Ajmer, had deputed his principal successor, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī in Delhi. However, the latter chose to live in Kīlūkhārī in the suburbs of Delhi. Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn's principal successor, Bābā Farīd lived in Ajōdhan in the Punjab. Bābā Farīd's principal successor, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', lived in Ghiyāthpur in the vicinity of Delhi. It

appears that the issue of directorship of a *jamā' atkhānah* and guardianship of a shrine after the demise of a Shaykh had nothing to do with the question of spiritual succession. Therefore, the hagiographical sources are silent as to who would supervise and manage the *jamā' atkhānah* after a Shaykh's demise, as this question seems not to bother the hagiographers much.

As far as the upkeep and maintenance of Bābā Farīd's *jamā' atkhānah* at Ajōdhan including the running of *langar* was concerned, Bābā Farīd had assigned various duties to his disciples during his lifetime.²⁰⁰ Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq, who happened to be Bābā Farīd's *khalīfah*, son-in-law and *khādim* (personal attendant) simultaneously,²⁰¹ was responsible for the management of the *jamā' atkhānah*. After Bābā Farīd's demise, he continued his responsibilities, but some differences developed between him and Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Sulaymān, the son of Bābā Farīd and the incumbent *sajjādah-nashīn*. Disheartened, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq left the *jamā' atkhānah* and took residence in the old *Jāmi'a* Mosque of Ajōdhan.²⁰² After Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq's departure, the issue of supervision and management of Bābā Farīd's *jamā' atkhānah* might have been raised. At this critical juncture, the family of Bābā Farīd or the incumbent *sajjādah-nashīn* must have directly assumed the responsibility of management of the *jamā' atkhānah*, in addition to the self-assumed duty of guardianship of Bābā Farīd's shrine. The newly added responsibility of managing the *jamā' atkhānah* must have increased the influence of the family among the people. Moreover, it must have placed the *futūḥ* and other resources of the *jamā' atkhānah* at the disposal of the descendants of Bābā Farīd.

²⁰⁰ Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar*, pp. 48-49, 52.

²⁰¹ 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār*, p. 73.

²⁰² Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, pp. 171-72.

It seems that the continuation of the institution of *jamā' atkhānah*, including the *langar*, of Bābā Farīd was considered necessary, for which resources were required. It seems useful to recall that when Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq awarded land and cash grants and stipends to the descendants of Bābā Farīd in the fourteenth century, a little less than a century after the demise of Bābā Farīd, the grants were meant for the maintenance and upkeep of the *jamā' atkhānah* of Bābā Farīd, which was under the supervision of his descendants. After the Delhi Sultans, the Mughul emperors also offered land grants to the *sajjādah-nashīns*. Over centuries, the prestige and authority of a *sajjādah* and a *sajjādah-nashīn* came to depend on the extent of *langar* and the splendor of the 'urs festivals.²⁰³ Moreover, the shrine of Bābā Farīd got precedence over the *jamā' atkhānah*, which became less significant as an institution. In other words, the centre of gravity shifted from the *jamā' atkhānah* to the tomb or the shrine.

The practice of appointing *sajjādah-nashīns* as hereditary successors to a Shaykh was motivated as much on pragmatic grounds arising out of the need to continue the institution of *jamā' atkhānah*, as by the desire of the descendants to become heir to the respect, devotion and reverence of the people which their ancestor commanded. The practice of hereditary succession in spiritual affairs prevalent among the Suhrawardīs might have also influenced the descendants of Bābā Farīd in Ajōdhan, since the place was not very far from Multan, the spiritual centre of the *Silsilah* Suhrawardiyyah.

²⁰³ David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1988), pp. 43, 45.

Initially, at least, two conditions were considered prerequisite for qualifying for *sajjādah-nashīnī* in Ajōdhan: first, the *sajjādah-nashīn* must possess some degree of godliness and piety; and second, he must be a direct descendant of the deceased Shaykh. With the passage of time, the second precondition emphasizing the lineage of a *sajjādah-nashīn* seems to have taken precedence over the first one. Consequently, the issue of *sajjādah-nashīnī* became a bone of contention among the rival contenders to *sajjādah*, and resulted in power politics in the ensuing centuries. Meanwhile, the lands which the descendants of Bābā Farīd possessed in the region kept on increasing, turning the family of the Chishtī Shaykh, who preferred *faqr* or voluntary poverty to *ghinā'* or wealth, into landed magnates. Thus, departing from the teachings of their ancestor as well as the traditions of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, the descendants of the Shaykh acquired endowments from kings and rulers, as well as from the *umarā'*, high state officials, local landlords, and wealthy merchants in the ensuing centuries. By the twentieth century, the 'shrine family' of Bābā Farīd in Ajōdhan owned one-tenth of all the land in the district, which was 43,000 acres, some of which was donated by the Sikh ruler of the Punjab, Raja Ranjit Singh.²⁰⁴ Gilmartin maintains that the authority of a *sajjādah-nashīn* of Pākpatan is derived from his adherence to more than one system of values. On one hand, being a descendant of Bābā Farīd, he was considered to be the inheritor of his revered ancestor, which extended him direct access to the moral authority deriving from Bābā Farīd's proximity to God. On the other hand, the popular authority of the *sajjādah-nashīn*

²⁰⁴ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849-1947* (Delhi: Manohar, 1988), p. 24.

depended on his ability to operate effectively in a localized political network.²⁰⁵

Gilmartin further observes:

In sharp contrast with the ideal of religious leadership which Baba Farid himself had exemplified, according to which moral authority was acquired by moving outside the world of normal political relations in order to gain closer access to God, the religious influence of the *sajjada nashin* derived from the very fact that he was able to operate within such an everyday political world.²⁰⁶

Studying the *sajjādah-nashīns* of the Punjab under the British rule, Gilmartin further observes that they wielded considerable local political power owing to the people's unfailing loyalty to the descendants of the Sufi Shaykhs. However, in 1930s, the shrine of Bābā Farīd was taken over by the court. Owing to a family dispute over inheritance, the British Government decided to officially supervise the annual 'urs festival. Gilmartin has revealed how the British administration used the political influence of the *sajjādah-nashīns* as intermediaries to establish their local control in the rural areas.²⁰⁷

In this way, the descendants of Bābā Farīd had accepted favours from the state in sheer disregard of the lofty principles and ideals of their ancestor. By doing so, they tried to negotiate the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* with the political authorities in the Sultanate of Delhi by readjusting and/or redefining the limits of the independent space of the *Silsilāh*. In other words, the principle of independence of the *Silsilah* from the state and politics was compromised by them. Nevertheless, the above discussion raises some

²⁰⁵ David Gilmartin, "Shrines, Succession and Sources of Moral Authority in the Punjab," in *Pakistan: The Social Sciences' Perspective*, ed. Akbar S. Ahmed (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 148.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, pp. 46-49.

important questions: Why did the descendants of Bābā Farīd fail to uphold and preserve the traditions of their ancestor? Were these descendants responsible for preserving the space of the *Silsilah* in the first place? One may argue that these descendants were not the custodians of the Chishtī ideals and traditions in the first place, and so there is no question of negotiating the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* with the political authorities. According to the principles of Sufism, a spiritual successor is a Shaykh's progeny. It is the spiritual lineage or the initiatic genealogy that is important in Sufism; lineage by blood holds no significance. Nonetheless, those who were unaware of these principles of Sufism, including the ordinary people and devotees of the Shaykhs as well as the rulers, approached the descendants of Bābā Farīd for different purposes. In fact, these descendants had been placed in an advantageous position owing to a number of factors such as their pedigree linking them to the great Chishtī Shaykh by blood, imparting an explicit Chishtī identity on the descendants, guardianship of the shrine of the Shaykh, and the management of the *jamā'atkhānah*. As for the popular perception of the devotees, they considered the *Dīwān* or the *Sajjādah-nashīn* and the shrine of Bābā Farīd to be carriers of Bābā Farīd's *barakah*, i.e. the spiritual power.²⁰⁸ Owing to these factors, these descendants enjoyed social prestige and economic prosperity along with religious/spiritual and political authority.

²⁰⁸ Richard M. Eaton, "Court of Man, Court of God: Local Perceptions of the Shrines of Bābā Farīd, Pakpattan, Punjab", in *Contributions to Asian Studies*, eds. K. Ishwaran and Bardwell L. Smith, vol. XVII, *Islam in Local Contexts*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), p. 45.

Section IV State and the Chishtī Leadership after Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn

Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd breathed his last in 1356 during the reign of Sultan Firūz Tughluq. Surprisingly, departing from the traditions of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, before his demise, the Shaykh did not appoint any of his *khulafā'* as his principal spiritual successor, though he had granted *khilāfat* to many of his disciples. However, his most-renowned *khalīfah*, Khwājah Saiyyid Muḥammad Bandahnawāz Gēsūdirāz, came to be recognized as the Chishtī leader after Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. After the demise of his preceptor, the Khwājah lived in Delhi for decades, but later migrated to Deccan and settled in Gulbargah, which was the capital of the Bahmanī Kingdom. This section briefly analyzes the issue of spiritual succession of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn, and the relationship of the Chishtī leader, Khwājah Gēsūdirāz, with the state.

6.8 Spiritual Succession after Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn

During his lifetime, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd had granted *khilāfat* to many of his disciples.²⁰⁹ When he was on his death-bed, Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn 'Alī requested him to nominate a spiritual successor. Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn asked him to prepare a list of all those whom he considered eligible for it. Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn soon presented a list, having three categories of disciples according to their spiritual caliber. After examining the list, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn remarked that they all were bearing the burden of their own faith, and would not be able to bear others' burden. Then he made a will that Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn's *khirqah*, staff, rosary, wooden bowl and wooden sandals be buried along

²⁰⁹ See details in Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh-i-Dehli*, pp. 118-27.

with him. Thus, all these articles of spiritual regalia he had received from his preceptor were buried with Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn in his grave,²¹⁰ and thus, not passed on to any of his *khulafā'*. This suggests that he did not appoint any one from amongst his *khulafā'* as his principal spiritual successor, unlike the practice of his preceptors, who always appointed one of their *khulafā'* as their principal spiritual successor.

Khwājah Gēsūdirāz, a renowned *khalīfah* of the Shaykh, is said to have washed the body of his preceptor, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, after his demise. The Khwājah is said to have taken the rope of the cot on which the Shaykh's corpse was washed, and coiled it around his neck uttering "this *khirqah* is enough for us."²¹¹ Though not nominated as the principal successor by his preceptor, the Khwājah was recognized as the Chishtī leader in Delhi after Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn.

The accounts of Qalandar and Jamālī suggest that Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn did not appoint anyone as his principal spiritual successor, as he did not consider anybody among his *khulafā'* worthy of it. It is important to note that another eminent *khalīfah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', Shaykh Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān, had also ordered his preceptor's

²¹⁰ Jamālī, *Siyar al-Ārifīn*, p. 96, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mirāt al-Asrār*, vol. II, p. 306.

²¹¹ Qalandar, *Khair-u'l-Majālis*, p. 287, and Jamālī, *Siyar al-Ārifīn*, p. 96. However, some biographers of the Khwājah claim that he was appointed as the principal successor by Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn. For instance, see Hussaini, *Sayyid Muḥammad al-Hisayni-i Gīsudirāz: On Sufism*, p. 12. Khusro Hussaini refers to contradictory statements from many sources, and admits that it is difficult to decide which statement is trustworthy. He argues that since the Khwājah served the *khānqāh* of his preceptor in Delhi for forty-four years, it may be taken as a proof of his being nominated. Moreover, it shows that he was accepted in Delhi as Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn's successor. See discussion on pp. 32-3, n.75. Nonetheless, three counter-arguments can be put forward here: first, the articles of regalia were not passed on to Khwājah Gēsūdirāz by his preceptor; secondly, there is no mention of the Khwājah in Amīr Khūrd's *Siyar al-Awliyā'* and Qalandar's *Khayr al-Majālis*; and lastly, the Sultans of Delhi did not approach the Khwājah, as they used to approach other leading Chishtī Shaykhs.

khirqah to be buried along with him.²¹² It seems that there was a general feeling among the Chishtī Shaykhs that the traditions of the Chishtī *Silsilah* were gradually waning away, and their *khulafā'* lacked the characteristics, which were demanded from a principal spiritual successor—the custodian of the traditions and ideals of the *Silsilah*. Aziz Ahmad maintains that the burial of the relics signified that the spiritual hierarchy had come to an end, at least in Delhi, and that it was the end of the 'saint-hood of grace' and only the 'saint-hood of faith' remained.²¹³

Şabāḥ al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān rightly observes that the main line of Chishtī Shaykhs ended with Shaykh Naşīr al-Dīn, and the glory of the Sultanate also started declining simultaneously after Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq.²¹⁴ Sultan Fīrūz died in 1388, and his successors proved weak and incapable of effectively managing the affairs of the Sultanate of Delhi. The Tughluq Dynasty ruled till 1412, and was replaced by the Saiyyid Dynasty. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, the process of disintegration of the Sultanate had already set in, and a number of independent kingdoms had already sprung up in various parts of India. One such independent state was the Bahmanī Kingdom, with its capital at Gulbargah. It was under the Bahmanī Sultans of Deccan that Khwājah Gēsūdirāz lived.

²¹² 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Akḥbār al-Akhyār*, p. 93.

²¹³ Aziz Ahmad, "The Sufī and the Sultan in Pre-Mughal Muslim India", p. 152. Probably Aziz Ahmad has referred to a statement of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', who described these two kinds of *walāyat*. Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, p. 430.

²¹⁴ 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Hindustān kē Salāṭīn*, 'Ulamā' aur Mashā'ikh kē Ta'lluqāt par ēk Nazar, p. 129-30.

6.9 Relationship of Khwājah Gēsūdirāz with the State

Khwājah Saiyyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Bandahnawāz Gēsūdirāz²¹⁵ (b. 1321-d. 1422) was Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn's most renowned *khalifah*. A prolific writer in Arabic, Persian and Dakhnī (the southern branch of Urdu) languages, he was an excellent poet as well as an erudite scholar.²¹⁶ He is considered to be the most popular Sufi Shaykh of Deccan, where he spent the last three decades of his life.

After his preceptor's demise, Khwājah Gēsūdirāz was recognized as the Chishtī leader since he served the *jamā' atkhānah* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn in Delhi for more than four decades after him. Three things must have helped the Khwājah in being recognized as the Chishtī leader after Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn: First, he lived in Delhi, the spiritual centre of the Chishtīs, whereas many other *khulafā'* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn had dispersed in other regions of India; secondly, he was the director of his preceptor's *jamā' atkhānah*; and lastly, the Khwājah lived for over a century, and spent about forty-four years in Delhi after the demise of his preceptor. During these four and a half decades, almost all other *khulafā'* of Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn passed away. Thus, in addition to his self-assumed role of a principal successor, his presence in Delhi, guardianship of his preceptor's *jamā' atkhānah*, as well as the long span of time he spent there, were important factors that contributed to Khwājah Gēsūdirāz's recognition as the Chishtī leader.

²¹⁵ Saiyyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī was titled Bandahnawāz (literally meaning the benefactor of the poor) and Gēsūdirāz (meaning the one with the long tresses).

²¹⁶ See details of his works in Hussaini, *Saiyyid Muḥammad al-Husayni-i Gisudiraz: On Sufism*, pp. 19-25.

Historical and hagiographical sources are silent regarding the relationship of Khwājah Gēsūdirāz with Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq and his successors. One may assume that during the forty-four years when the Khwājah lived in Delhi, he remained aloof from the court and politics, and had no relationship with the Sultans of Delhi. There is no evidence to suggest that the Sultans of Delhi ever approached him for seeking his blessings, offering *futūh* or personally meeting him. However, there is only one incident of indirect interaction between the Sultan and the Khwājah. The Khwājah was very fond of *samā'*.²¹⁷ During the reign of Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq, some 'ulamā' reported to the Sultan that in the *samā'* gatherings, disciples and devotees prostrated before Khwājah Gēsūdirāz. The Sultan ordered the Khwājah to listen to *samā'* in seclusion. Since then the Khwājah listened to *samā'* from inside a cell with a curtain separating him from the rest of the listeners.²¹⁸ It can be inferred that the practice of the Khwājah was different from the practice of his preceptor, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn, who did not permit his disciples and devotees to prostrate before him. Moreover, the Khwājah seems to have a compromising and accommodative temperament, as he did not object to or try to resist the state directive. As pointed out above that the Sultan was a under the influence of the 'ulamā', who were more cautious in matters of *Sharī'ah* and disapproved of Sufism, it is not surprising that he tried to curb some of the practices prevalent in the Sufi circles, such as prostration before a Shaykh, which was condemned by some of the 'ulamā'.

²¹⁷ Iqbāl al-Dīn Aḥmad, *Tadhkirah-'i Khwājah Gēsūdirāz* (Karachi: Iqbāl Publishers, 1966), pp. 170-72; see also the views of the Khwājah on *samā'*. pp. 90-94, and Aslam, "Salāṭīn-i Dehlī wa Shāhān-i Muḡhliyyah kā Dhauq-i Mawsīqī," pp. 17-18. For a detailed discussion, see Hussaini, *Sayyid Muḡammad al-Husayni-i Gīsudirāz: On Sufism*, pp. 110-72.

²¹⁸ Muḡammad 'Alī Sāmānī, *Siyar-i Muḡammadī*, (comp. 1427-28), ed. and trans. S. S. Nadhīr Aḥmad Qādirī (Hyderabad, 1969), pp. 87-88, as cited in Hussaini, *Sayyid Muḡammad al-Husayni-i Gīsudirāz: On Sufism*, p. 125. *Siyar-i Muḡammadī* was written in 1427, and its author was a disciple of Khwājah Gēsūdirāz.

Shortly before the invasion of Taimūr in 1398, Khwājah Gēsūdirāz migrated from north India to Deccan in the south, where he spent the last three decades of his life. Contrary to his relationship with the Sultans of Delhi, the Khwājah enjoyed cordial relationship with the Bahmanī Sultans of Deccan. Nevertheless, his relationship with the Bahmanī Sultans lies outside the scope of the present study, but it has been briefly discussed in the following. But before discussing it, it seems pertinent to briefly explore his views regarding political power.

The views of Khwājah Gēsūdirāz regarding political power were a clear departure from those of his preceptors. He is credited with the compilation of *Khātimah*, which he completed in 1404. In fact, he had translated *Ādāb al-Murīdīn*, written by twelfth-century Sufi Shaykh Abū 'l-Najīb Abū 'l-Qāhir al-Suhrawardī, in Persian, and wrote *Khātimah* as a supplement to *Ādāb al-Murīdīn*.²¹⁹ The work states that the Sufis are only conditionally permitted to join government service. The Sufis may serve the government with the intention that they would protect the people from the atrocities of government officials and help redress the grievances of the aggrieved.²²⁰ In this work, the Khwājah seems to have been influenced by the views of the Suhrawardī Shaykh regarding the relationship of the Sufis with the government. It is also important to note that when he completed the work in 1404, he had already migrated from the Delhi Sultanate, and had settled in the Bahmanī Kingdom, where he enjoyed cordial relations with the rulers.

²¹⁹ The Khwājah thought that some points in *Ādāb al-Murīdīn* required additional explanation or some new themes required to be included in it. However, he did not give the work a new name, and instead named it as such.

²²⁰ Gēsūdirāz, *Khātimah (Tarjumah-'i Ādāb al-Murīdīn)*, pp. 36-37.

Owing to the imminent invasion of the Turco-Mongol conqueror, Taimūr (b. 1336-d. 1405),²²¹ Khwājah Gēsūdirāz migrated from Delhi towards South in 1398. He reached Gujrat in 1399, where he was warmly received by Ṣafar Khān, the governor of Gujrat, and his son Tātār Khān. Ṣafar Khān also offered him a huge *futūḥ* when the Khwājah reached Khambayat. Then he left for the Bahmanī Kingdom, and reached Faṭḥabād Deogir, where the governor of the province paid homage to him, and presented *futūḥ* on behalf of the Bahmanī Sultan, Tāj al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (r. 1397-1422). When the Khwājah finally reached Gulbargah, the capital of the Kingdom, in 1400, the Sultan himself came out of the city to receive him. The Sultan also requested him to settle down at Gulbargah,²²² which the Khwājah accepted. However, Sultan's brother, Aḥmad Khān *Khān-i Khānān*, who became a devotee of the Khwājah, was more favourably inclined towards him as compared to his brother, the reigning Sultan. Aḥmad also constructed a *khānqāh* for the Khwājah in the city.²²³

Khwājah Gēsūdirāz finally settled at Gulbargah, but he could not maintain a safe physical distance from court and kings. In the beginning, he enjoyed cordial relations with Sultan Fīrūz Shāh.²²⁴ However, after some time their relations broke down. According to Farishtah, in 1415, the Sultan appointed his eldest son, Ḥasan Khān, as his heir-apparent, who was licentious and dissolute. When the Sultan urged the Khwājah to

²²¹ For a brief biographical sketch and military expeditions of Taimūr, see Bertold Spuler, *The Muslim World: A Historical Survey*, Part II, *The Mongol Period*, Eng. trans. from German F. R. C. Bagley (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), pp. 65-68.

²²² Sāmānī, *Siyar-i Muḥammadī*, as cited in Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 264.

²²³ Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. III, p. 110.

²²⁴ Hussaini, *Sayyid Muḥammad al Husayni-i-Gisudirāz: On Sufism*, p. 8.

bless his heir-apparent, he refused to do so. The Sultan ordered him to move to some other place, as his *khānqāh* was near the fort. Consequently, the Khwājah shifted his *khānqāh* to some other place in the city. Meanwhile, Khwājah Gēsūdirāz threw his support to the Sultan's brother, Aḥmad, who eventually succeeded Sultan Fīrūz Shāh.²²⁵ The Khwājah enjoyed cordial relations with Sultan Aḥmad Shāh (r. 1422-36), who was a devotee of the Khwājah. The new Sultan granted towns and villages to him,²²⁶ which he accepted. However, he passed away a few weeks after Sultan Aḥmad's accession to the throne in 1422. Khwājah Gēsūdirāz was buried in Gulbargah. The new Sultan constructed a splendid mausoleum over his grave. The same year that the Khwājah passed away, the Sultan shifted his capital from Gulbargah to Bēdār. Like the descendants of Bābā Farīd, Khwājah Gēsūdirāz's family administered the affairs of the *dargāh* as well as the estate, which they had inherited from him.

The preceptors of Khwājah Gēsūdirāz had tried to preserve and defend the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Sultanate of Delhi. Khwājah Gēsūdirāz also remained indifferent towards his contemporary Sultan of Delhi, Fīrūz Tughluq. However, when he migrated to Deccan, he chose to settle at Gulbargah, the seat of the political power, in the Bahmanī Kingdom, at the request of the reigning Sultan. In a changed political environment, the Khwājah could not follow the Chishtī ideal of detachment from the state and political authorities, and thus, could not maintain the independence of the Chishtī *Silsilah* from the state.

²²⁵ See details in Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. III, pp. 110-18. See also Haroon Khan Sherwani, *The Bahmanis of the Deccan: An Objective Study* (Hyderabad, Deccan: Ṣa'ūd Manzil, n.d.), pp. 165-66.

²²⁶ Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i Farishtah*, (Ṭālib), vol. III, pp. 118-19, and Māndavī, *Gulzār-i Abrār*, p. 139.

To conclude, Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq tried to compensate the harm his predecessor had done to the Sufis, and made attempts to revive the Sufi institutions. He adopted a two-pronged policy of conciliation and containment towards the Sufis, which was largely determined by diverse, rather conflicting, influences on him. Nonetheless, the state policy of conciliating the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs proved counter-productive. Though the Chishtī Shaykhs tried to preserve the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the political confines of the Sultanate of Delhi, the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs tried to negotiate this space with the state by readjusting and/or redefining the limits of the independent space of the *Silsilah*. The Chishtī ideals of detachment from the state and politics, and non-acceptance of land grants and official positions from the kings were compromised by these descendants. It strengthened the practice of *sajjādah-nashīnī* in the Chishtīs, which eventually turned the families and descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs into landed magnates as well as allies of the state.

CONCLUSION

The study focused on the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Delhi Sultanate during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Chishtī *Silsilah* as it functioned during these two centuries in India was founded by Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī. After travelling in several countries and also residing at many places within the Indian Subcontinent, the Chishtī Shaykh finally settled in Ajmer in the last decade of the twelfth century. Most of the principles of the *Silsilah* in India were articulated here but the Shaykh traced his Sufī ancestry or the initiatic genealogy to the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) through a long chain of eminent Sufīs that included Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham and Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyāḍ. Such Sufīs were noted for their voluntary poverty as well as for their censure of the rulers of their day for their excessive worldliness and pursuit of power. Ibrāhīm ibn Adham gave up his kingdom and joined the ranks of the Sufīs. Several other Sufī *silsilahs* sprang up around this time, acting in an organized manner and establishing Sufī dwellings or *khānqāhs* for their disciples, who would join for leading/living a communal life for their spiritual development.

At the time when Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn decided to propagate the teachings of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Indian Subcontinent, the Turkish Sultan, Shihāb al-Dīn Ghaurī gained a decisive victory over the Hindu rajas that sealed the latter’s fate as rulers for centuries. By 1206, the Turkish military leaders came to establish a Sultanate over the

conquered Indian territories, which stretched from Bengal and Bihar in the East, and Punjab, Multan and Sindh in the North-West. This Sultanate had a mixed population of Muslims and Hindus, the latter being in large majority. The Sultanate of Delhi, as it came to be known after its capital, functioned as an independent political unit as several other such units came to operate in the Muslim lands.

The Sultanate in the Muslim history came to be an institution of vital importance: theoretically, the Sultan was required to provide an appropriate environment for the implementation of the *Shari'ah*. On the other hand, the traditionally important office of the Caliph was to act as a symbol of sanctity and continuity of the Caliphate after the Prophet. The *Shari'ah* as the Prophetic/revealed law, which was believed to comprehend all aspects of a Muslim's life, was to be interpreted by the '*ulamā*', learned in the science of *Shari'ah*.

The Sultanate of Delhi was established by non-Indian Muslim military leaders, mainly of Turkish origin, but also including individuals and tribes belonging to other racial groups. It acted as an independent political unit, in which having good relations with the Caliph in Baghdad was considered an important factor in enhancing the position of the Sultan in the eyes of the local Muslim subjects. This consideration had some weight with the Sultan, for, according to the *Shari'ah*, it was not only a requirement of exigencies of state power, but also an injunction of the *Shari'ah*.

In the first decade of the thirteenth century, one finds in substantial part of the Subcontinent, a Sultanate, a Muslim power, which is mainly based on military conquest, and both the military leaders (now the ruling elite of the Sultanate) and the Muslim inhabitants expected it to largely act in the light of Islamic sentiments or *Sharī'ah*, interpretation of which now having become a special field of Muslim jurists or the '*ulamā*'.

Historically, the post-*Khilāfat-i Rāshidah* political/state leaders faced criticism from more spiritually minded elements for being this-worldly, extravagant and ostentatious. Such criticism came to be extended against jurists when the latter accepted positions of power, particularly in the Abbasid state. Over time, Sufis claimed the possibility of superior knowledge based on *ma'arifah*, or intuition, granted by God to people who sought, like Sufis, nearness to God and attended to their spiritual uplift. The idea of intuitive knowledge (being close to Prophetic revelation), and Sufi rituals of *dhikr* and *samā'* (performed as a mode of spiritual development, and a characteristic feature of Sufi communal life) led to conflict between '*ulamā*' and the Sufis. This conflict was largely resolved by al-Ghazzālī, though perhaps not completely.

The Sultanate of Delhi as a state headed by the Sultan, while the *umarā'* and '*ulamā*' were considered to be the share-holders in power for its functioning and survival. The Sultanate was also home to spiritually minded elements now organized in Sufi *silsilahs*. The two earliest *silsilahs* introduced in the Indian Subcontinent include the Chishtiyyah and the Suhrawardiyyah. The Sufi *silsilahs* were primarily concerned with

salvation and emphasizing love of God, also looked at public welfare, though more in spiritual terms. Sufis presented themselves as moral exemplars in the Muslim society, also organized under a revealed law. The Sufis were believed to possess spiritual powers which could do people good in providing for some material needs besides solace in this world, and bring about salvation in the hereafter. As such, the Sufis had tremendous popular respect and appeal. The Chishtī Sufī, Khwājah Mu‘in al-Dīn, demonstrated the popular appeal quite early when he went to reside in Ajmer because a large number of people, including both Muslims and non-Muslims, thronged his abode in Delhi. The Khwājah’s *khalifah*, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī enjoyed similar popular appeal: when he decided to leave Delhi and move to Ajmer, the populace of Delhi, both Muslims and Hindus, prevailed upon him to stay back. The popularity of the Chishtī Shaykhs reached its zenith during the times of Bābā Farīd and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’.

The Chishtī Shaykhs enjoyed firm allegiance, unflinching loyalty and profound love of the people. There is evidence to show that the people did not see the Sufi Shaykhs as rival claimants to the political authority in Delhi, despite the fact that the titles and epithets of the Chishtī Shaykhs. Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ was, for instance, popularly known as *Sulṭān al-Mashā’ikh*, which indicated the reverence in he was held by the people. These titles, quite evidently, had political overtones. Though some of the rulers perceived, in the popularity of the Sufi Shaykhs, a challenge to their political authority, the popular image of the Sufis was that of the religious mentors and moral guardians. Indeed, it was the moral authority which the Sufi Shaykhs exercised over the people. Here Amīr Khusrau’s reply to Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī seems quite significant:

when Amīr Khusrau revealed the secret plan of the Sultan to visit the *jamā'atkhānah* of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', the Sultan called an explanation of the Amīr, who replied that disobedience to the Sultan meant loss of life, whereas disobedience to the Shaykh meant loss of faith. The Amīr, quite obviously, placed a higher value on the preservation of faith, and did not care for his life.

State actors in the Sultanate, who were conspicuous for their religious zeal and felt strongly for the *Shari'ah*, and the Shaykhs of the Chishtī *Silsilah* could cooperate harmoniously. But often this harmonious relationship and cooperation did not come about. On the one hand, the actual behaviour of the Chishtī Shaykhs ranged between toleration and/or polite refusal of stately demands to calculated defiance. On the other hand, the attitude of the Sultans ranged from sincere and great personal respect to coerced submission and compliance to stately demands. Variations in the behaviour of both the Sultans and the Chishtī Shaykhs have been explained by reference to two factors, namely, the Turco-Persian traditions of the Sultanate as an institution and varying personality traits of the Sultans, on the one hand, and the traditions of the Chishtī *Silsilah* and judgments of the individual Chishtī Shaykhs as to the limits to which they could go in response to state-imposed obligations or commands, on the other.

The evidence presented in chapters four to six further leads to the conclusion that interpretations of the traditions of the Sultanate were influenced by the personality of the ruling Sultans (scholarly and/or religious orientations, fastidiousness, and the question of legitimacy or otherwise of the mode of coming into power/acquisition of throne by the

Sultan, etc.), the advice and/or pressure from important state functionaries, particularly ‘*ulamā*’ with or without sympathy towards the Chishtī Sufis, and the prevailing religio-intellectual environment which, during the fourteenth century, absorbed the ideas of Ibn al-‘Arabī, a seminal Sufi, and Ibn Taymiyah, a great jurist.

The Chishtīs earnestly desired to maintain their doctrinal freedom as well as live by their convictions in the Sultanate of Delhi. The fundamental motive in the life of the Chishtī Sufis was a spiritual one. They sought nearness to God. This could principally be promoted by love for God, and love for His creatures. Love for God involved exertion and discipline in *dhikr* (Recollecting God) and *samā*’ (listening to music and poetry praising God, often involving ecstatic dance). Many Muslims, including a number of ‘*ulamā*’, were not favourably disposed to the *samā*’ rituals, considering them sensual. On the other hand, in the Chishtī understanding, even the initial sensual movements formed a vital part of the ecstasy and, therefore, were considered essential and meritorious. This methodology was considered very important for carrying out the task of spiritual enlightenment of the people, which could only be possible if undue influence of the state and political authorities in their affairs was cautiously prevented. This allowed the Chishtī Shaykhs to carve out an environment or a space for their spiritual practices, in which the state interference was minimal. It provided the Chishtī Shaykhs the time and energy they needed to concentrate on their work of bringing the people nearer to God by their spiritual development and self-purification. Their association with the political authorities could impede the growth and expansion of this environment or space.

Soon after the inception of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in India in the last decade of the twelfth century, Khwājah Mu‘in al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer along with his contemporary Chishtī Shaykhs including Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Suwālī of Nāgaur, laid down the principles of the *Silsilah*. These principles included, *inter alia*, the minimum and, from the point of view of the *Silsilah*'s tradition and spiritual methodology, the least injurious contact with the state and the rulers. From the very beginning, the Chishtī Shaykhs in India made it a definite policy to keep a distance from the rulers, for which the Chishtīs had recourse to a variety of means. Some of these means were the following: first, not accepting services under the Sultans; secondly, not accepting lands or *jāgīrs* from the Sultans, the ruling elite and other influential people; thirdly, not agreeing to visit of their *khānqāhs* by the Sultans; and lastly, not visiting the court of the Sultans of Delhi. In addition, the Chishtī Shaykhs used their individual judgment in regard to three things: first, the acceptance or rejection of the cash grants or *futūḥ* items offered by the Sultans and the *umarā'*, secondly, avoiding or admitting the *umarā'* in their company, and lastly, extending help to the Sultans or the Sultanate of Delhi.

Our study leads to the following conclusions with regard to the above-mentioned principles set for freedom of Sufi spiritual life by the Chishtīs:

The Chishtī Sufis categorically rejected the government titles or positions. Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, who lived in the suburbs of Delhi, begged to be excused when Sultan Iletmish offered him the honourific title of *Shaykh al-Islām*. This was

despite the fact that the Sultan himself had a Sufi bent of mind. Sultan Iletmish was, however, not much disturbed by the Shaykh's refusal. He was the only Chishtī Shaykh during the period under study, i.e. the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, who was offered this official designation by the Sultanate. After his refusal to accept it, the title was never offered to any other principal Chishtī Shaykh.

In addition, the Chishtī Shaykhs had also strictly prohibited their senior disciples and *khulafā'* to accept any government position. Qāḍī Muḥyī al-Dīn Kāshānī's *khilāfatnāmah* was held in abeyance for one year by his preceptor, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', on mere suspicion of Kāshānī's interest in government service. However, there was no such restriction for the ordinary disciples and devotees, many of whom served in officials positions. Nonetheless, the views of the Chishtī Sufis regarding the judicial structure in the Delhi Sultanate reveal that they did not trust it. They perceived it as an instrument of coercion, and therefore, they always advised others not to join it.

In the fourteenth century, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq tried to employ the Chishtī Shaykhs in the state service, and to assign varied official responsibilities to them. The Shaykhs who refused to accept were severely punished. Nonetheless, some of the Chishtī Shaykhs tried to tactfully evade official directives, at the same time trying to preempt any open hostility or conflict with the Sultan. These include, among others, Mawlānā Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā, Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī, Shaykh Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān, and Shaykh Ḥuṣṣām al-Dīn of Multan. However, Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn

Maḥmūd, the Chishtī leader after Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', could not escape persecution at the hands of the Sultan.

However, among the Chishtīs those who accepted the official title and designation of *Shaykh al-Islām* included the descendants of Bābā Farīd, and a disciple, though not a *khalifah*, of Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'. Bābā Farīd's great grandson, Shaykh 'Ilm al-Dīn, and later his son, Shaykh Mazḥar al-Dīn, were elevated to the position of *Shaykh al-Islām* successively by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq in the fourteenth century. Similarly, Khwājah Karīm al-Dīn Samarqandī, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn's disciple but not a *khalifah*, was also granted the title of *Shaykh al-Islām* and sent to Bengal by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. Since the Sultan was keen to assign the Sufīs certain official tasks, the Khwājah might have been forced by the Sultan to accept the position, but as for its acceptance by the descendants of Bābā Farīd, it seems to have been voluntary.

In fact, by this time the tombs of the deceased Chishtī Shaykhs had grown into shrines visited by a large number of devotees seeking the *barakah* or blessings of the deceased Shaykhs. At the same time the shrines came under the management of the lineal descendants of the Shaykhs, and there grew the phenomenon of hereditary *sajjādah-nashīns*. By virtue of this the descendants also came to possess spiritual importance in the eyes of the devotees, which also lend significance of political import to these custodians of Chishtī shrines. Most prominent among them were the descendants of Bābā Farīd in Ajōdhan. When Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq tried to employ the '*ulamā*' and Sufīs in the state service, he turned to these descendants as well, who gave him a positive

response by accepting official titles and assignments. One may describe the latter situation in terms of compromising or negotiating the independent space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Delhi Sultanate, remembering that these descendants owed their elevated position to their being the progeny of the great Chishtī Shaykh, and the guardianship of his shrine and management of the historic *jamā'atkhānah* that continued in Ajōdhan after the death of Bābā Farīd. Negotiation of the independent space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* in the Sultanate of Delhi was brought about by redefining or readjusting the limits of the space of the Chishtīs in consideration of the political realities.

The views of the Chishtī Shaykhs were quite unequivocal regarding the land grants or *jāgīrs* from the Sultans of Delhi or other state officials. The Chishtī stance on the rejection of land grants was uncompromising and inflexible. They never accepted any official land grant since the ownership of land symbolized permanence and worldliness, as well as identification with power and the ruling elite. Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī turned down the offer of a land grant from the Sultan, while Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Suwālī turned down a similar land grant from a high state official of Nāgaur. Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd alias Bābā Farīd refused to accept the offer of a land grant from Ulugh Khān Balban, the then prime minister of Sultan Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. Similar offers of land grants were declined by Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī as well. However, later Khwājah Bandahnawāz Gēsūdirāz accepted land grants from the Bahmanī Sultans of Deccan in the fifteenth century. Similarly, some of the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs accepted land grants from the

Tughluq Sultans of Delhi during the fourteenth century. In this way, they tried to negotiate the autonomous space of the Chishtī *Silsilah* with the state.

It must be remembered that many times, the Sultans of Delhi offered land grants to the Chishtī Shaykhs in order to test them rather than out of sincere devotion and reverence. For instance, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar was offered a *jāgīr* by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq with similar intent, but he did not accept it. Moreover, such offers from the state at times serve as safety valve to pressures on Muslim rulers such as crisis of legitimacy. However, this does not detract from the fact that some Sultans were sincerely devoted to the Chishtī Shaykhs as well, and they made public manifestations of this sincerity in the form of offers of official grants to them.

The Chishtī Shaykhs also tried to preempt the visit of the Sultans to their *khānqāhs*. Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī settled in Ajmer far away from the capital of the Delhi Sultanate. Therefore, there did not arise any occasion of his directly coming into contact with the royal court and the Sultans of Delhi. During one of his visits to Delhi, Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī prevented Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī from informing Sultan Iltutmish about his arrival in the capital. So the Khwājah preferred not to see the Sultan. However, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, who lived in the capital, could not prevent the Sufi-minded Sultan Iltutmish from visiting his *khānqāh*. Bābā Farīd lived in the distant town of Ajōdhan, away from the capital, and only once did Ulugh Khān Balban, the deputy Sultan, pay him a visit. Since Bābā Farīd’s meeting with Ulugh Khān Balban was unavoidable, the former took the opportunity of giving a good

counsel to the deputy-Sultan in an implicit manner. Here one may recall al-Ghazzālī's position on the issue that if meeting with the kings becomes inescapable, a Sufi should take the opportunity of giving good counsel to them.

Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' was quite strict in this regard, since he lived in Ghiyāthpur, in the suburbs of Delhi. He did not allow Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī and Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī to visit his *jamā'atkhānah* despite their repeated requests. However, at the occasion of the *fātiḥah* of Shaykh Ḍiyā al-Dīn Rūmī, both Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī and Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn ran into each other. During the brief conversation that took place between them, the Shaykh gave a subtle counsel to the Sultan.

Some of the Chishtī Shaykhs were summoned by the Sultans of Delhi to the royal court. The Chishtī stance regarding it displayed variation, depending largely on the then circumstances. Though the early Chishtī Shaykhs including Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, and Bābā Farīd had never been summoned by the Sultans, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' was summoned by Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī to appear in the court personally in order to greet him on the eve of the new lunar month. However, the Shaykh refused to comply with the official order. Here the stance of the Shaykh was uncompromising. On another occasion when the Shaykh was asked by Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq to participate in a public hearing on the issue of legality or otherwise of the controversial Sufi practice of *samā'*, the Shaykh attended it without hesitation, and defended his stance on the issue. Thus on one

occasion, the Shaykh refused to visit the court, whereas on the other he did visit it. The variation in the attitude of the Shaykh is not difficult to explain since the two situations were quite different.

Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, who was known for his over-bearing and harsh attitude, summoned Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā and Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī to his palace. Fearing severe punishment, the Chishtī Shaykhs had complied with the official directives. Similarly, before his death in Thattah (Sindh), Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq had summoned Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, along with some other religious notables, in the royal presence. The Shaykh was forced to go to the royal camp, and he complied with the directives. Thus, most of the Chishtī Shaykhs were cautious not to create an overt conflict with the state.

Apart from these issues where the Chishtī Sufis' stance was relatively categorical and inflexible, their attitude displayed variation in matters where they had used their individual judgment:

The question of cash grants or *futūḥ* was different from the *jāgīrs*, since the Chishtī Shaykhs had a flexible position regarding the acceptance or rejection of cash grants. They used their individual judgment in each case in accepting or rejecting them, which was more context-specific. It was more in line with the views of al-Ghazzālī, who listed a range of options to the Sufi adepts in such cases.

The early Chishtī Shaykhs of India--Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Suwālī--accepted neither land grants nor cash grants from the rulers, including the *umarā’* and the high state officials. However, Bābā Farīd accepted cash grants on some occasions. But the Shaykh did not consume them personally, as it was immediately distributed among the needy and the poor. Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ and Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar of Hānsī also used their own judgments in accepting or rejecting the cash grants. Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn accepted cash grants from the rulers in some cases, rejecting them on the other, but these grants were not meant for his personal use. In fact, it is difficult to generalize his attitude regarding the *futūḥ* owing to lack of firm historical evidence, the sources being silent on the issue. However, there is evidence, though insubstantial, which suggests that the Chishtī Shaykhs accepted cash grants on occasions when the refusal to accept them could cause serious friction between them and the Sultans or high state officials.

As for the issue of company of *umarā’*, historical evidence suggests that the early Chishtī Shaykhs of India such as Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī and Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Suwālī strictly avoided the company of the *umarā’*, ministers, and the ruling elite. Bābā Farīd also avoided their company. Once Malīk Sharaf al-Dīn Kubrā, the *muqṭa’* of Dipalpur came to him to perform *bay‘at* at his hands, Bābā Farīd asked his *khalīfah*, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq, to accept the *muqṭa’* in his discipleship. Thus, Bābā Farīd refused to accept a high state official as his disciple. The Chishtī stance on the issue was, however, modified during the

times of Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā', as he accepted a number of *umarā'*, high state officials, ministers and members of the ruling elite and royal family in his discipleship. Given the ever-increasing popularity of the Shaykh among the people and the close proximity of his *jamā'atkhānah* to the seat of the Sultanate, the Shaykh had admitted them in his discipleship. As a result, not only these *umarā'*, high state officials, ministers and members of the ruling elite and royal family gained access to the Chishtī *jamā'atkhānah* in Delhi, the Chishtī doctrines and values penetrated their psyche or consciousness as well. The internalization of these values by them affected their behaviour as well as the discharge of official duties in a positive sense, though people like Ḍiyā al-Dīn Baranī could never internalize the notion of equality, and continued to believe in racial, ethnic and communal discrimination.

Nonetheless, there were few exceptions to the rule as well. Contrary to the traditions of the *Silsilah*, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ghaznavī, the *khalīfah* of Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, spent his time in the company of the *umarā'* and high state officials. His *khānqāh* was constructed by the state treasurer, who also financed the boarding and lodging of the *dervishes*. However, such examples are few and far between.

There is evidence that some of the Chishtī Shaykhs extended help, when asked by the Sultan, to the Sultans/Sultanate of Delhi in the hour of need and in matters of public interest. Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī helped Qubāchah in warding off the Mongol invasion. Similarly, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' extended help to Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn in case of Warrangal campaign, where the fate of the vast expeditionary army was not

known. On another occasion when Delhi was besieged by the Mongols, the Sultan sent his *amīrs* to the Shaykh and asked him to pray. The Shaykh assured them safety, and the Mongols retreated the next day.

Thus, it could be said that approximately during the first three or four decades of the thirteenth century, the Chishtī Shaykhs were able to carve out an independent environment or space for their spiritual activities in which the state interference was negligible. In the ensuing decades, the Chishtī leadership under Bābā Farīd and the later chain of designated *khulafā'* including Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Mutawakkil, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq, Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn of Hānsī, and Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir, and some notable disciples tried to preserve this space, and considerably expanded it as well. Expansion of space meant clear and explicit articulation and practice of the Chishtī principles pertaining to the relationship of the Chishtī adepts with the state or political authorities.

After Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', there were attempts by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, himself a scholar with a rationalist bent of mind, and under considerable influence of the thought of Ibn Taymiyyah, to interfere in the existing practices of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, including a sustained attempt to make prominent Chishtī Sufīs to accept government posts. It was an attempt to encroach on the space of the *Silsilah*, which the *Silsilah* had created for itself. Encroachment on the independent space or position of the Chishtī *Silsilah* meant that the Chishtīs were pressurized to compromise the extent of the practice of the Chishtī principles. Many prominent Chishtī Shaykhs resisted or evaded the

official directives. In this way, the space of their *Silsilah* was defended by them. However, some of them could not resist the state pressure, and accepted government positions. On the whole, the Chishtīs tried not to antagonize their relationship with the political authorities, the only exception being a notable Chishtī Sufī Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn *Haqq-go*, who was executed by Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq for calling the Sultan a tyrant or *zālim*.

The successor to Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq, was known to be a religiously inclined person. He tried to effect reconciliation with the Chishtī Shaykhs. However, on the advice of the '*ulamā*', he agreed to the execution of a Chishtī adept, Khwājah Mas'ūd Bakk, on the charge of pantheism claimed to have been inspired by the ideas of Ibn al-'Arabī. Under Sultan Fīrūz, state patronage and awards to the descendants of the Chishtī Shaykhs, or *sajjādah-nashīns*, worked to enhance their financial position and spiritual status in the eyes of the devotees, as well as their social prestige and political authority among the people at large.

It must be remembered that both Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Fīrūz Tughluq were the disciples of Bābā Farīd's grandson, Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn of Ajōdhan, and not the disciples of any of the principal successors of the Chishtī Shaykhs, or their *khulafā'*. It seems that the hereditary succession and lineage of a person were more for these Sultans, as kingship in the Sultanate of Delhi was also based on the principle of hereditary succession.

The ‘*ulamā*’ had come to be generally recognized as interpreters of the *Shari‘ah*. In the Sultanate of Delhi, many of them were critical of Sufi claims to *ma‘arifah* or intuitive knowledge and their practices of *samā‘* and accompanying *raqs*. Some of the ‘*ulamā*’ genuinely contested such Sufi beliefs and practices, but some of the ‘*ulamā*’ were not happy with the public sway held by the Chishtī Sufis. Some of the Sufis were called to explain their position regarding *samā‘*. Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ did attend the *maḥḍar* or a public debate to clear his position. However, some of the ‘*ulamā*’ were widely recognized as Sufis as well such as Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī and Qāḍī Muḥyī al-Dīn Kāshānī.

Contrary to the Chishtī traditions of maintaining distance from the Sultan and the court, the Shaykhs of Suhrawardī *Silsilah* believed in cordial relations with the Sultans of Delhi in order to instruct the latter in the principles of religion and public welfare. They extended help to the Sultans for better conduct of the internal affairs as well as external security against the Mongols. They received official titles with positions as well as cash and land grants from the state, and utilized them for their *khānqāhs* and charitable purposes. Such cooperative relationships sometime led to interference on the part of certain Sultans in the organization and work of the *Silsilah*. Disputes arising out of hereditary succession among the descendants of seminal Suhrawardī Shaykhs came to be settled by the Sultans.

To conclude, in our study of the relationship between the Chishtī *Silsilah* and the Sultanate of Delhi during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the evidence suggests

that there is a discernable pattern to the interaction between the two, and the guiding principles of the Chishtī conduct. The Chishtī Shaykhs maintained a safe distance from the Sultans and the Delhi court, and also tried not to antagonize the political authorities by minimizing any chances of overt conflict with and open defiance of the state. In order to keep a distance from the state and politics, and maintain the space of the Chishtī *Silsilah*, the Chishtīs laid down and acted upon some principles, namely, not accepting services under the Sultans, not accepting lands or *jāgīrs* from the rulers and other influential people, not agreeing to visit of their *khānqāhs* by the Sultans, and not visiting the court of the Sultans of Delhi. To minimize chances of overt contention with the state, the Chishtī Shaykhs used their individual judgment in case of some of the principles, e.g., the acceptance or rejection of cash grants or *futūḥ* items offered by the Sultans and the *umarā'*, avoiding or admitting the *umarā'* in their company, and extending help to the Sultans/Sultanate of Delhi on critical occasions. In such cases, individual Shaykhs conducted themselves, keeping in view the gravity of the situation, and thereby avoiding possible injury to the interests of the *Silsilah* and its space, welfare of the people at large, and indeed, the Sultanate of Delhi itself.

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A Selected Glossary of Persian and Arabic Terms and Phrases

Many of the terms given in the glossary have complex and multiple meanings. The meanings stressed in the glossary correspond to the senses in which they have been used in the study.

<i>ahl-i qāl</i>	an externalist scholar, unaware of the mysteries of Sufism; a title given to the ‘ <i>ulamā</i> ’ who were opposed to Sufism by the Sufis
<i>ajlāf</i>	the so-called ‘low-born’ people, a title used at times for the Indian converts to Islam in India
‘ <i>ālim</i> (pl. ‘ <i>ulamā</i> ’)	a religious scholar
‘ <i>āmil</i>	revenue collector
<i>amīr</i> (pl. <i>umarā</i>)	a member of the ruling elite, often occupying a high official designation
<i>anā 'l-Ḥaqq</i>	lit., ‘I am the Truth’, presumably a self-divinizing slogan raised in ecstasy, attributed to Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr Ḥallāj, for which he was condemned to death
‘ <i>arīd</i> ’/‘ <i>arīd-i mamālik</i>	head of the military department
‘ <i>aṣā</i> ’	wooden staff
<i>Ashāb al-Ṣuffah</i>	lit., ‘People of the Platform’, a group of the Companions of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) who had devoted their lives to worship and learning
<i>ashrāf</i>	the ‘high-born’, often used for the descendants of the migrants from the Muslim lands to India
‘ <i>aṣr</i> (prayer)	late afternoon prayer
<i>bandah</i> (pl. <i>bandagān</i>)	a slave or a servant
<i>bāōlī</i>	a well with stairs
<i>baqā</i> ’	subsistence or permanence

<i>barakah</i>	spiritual power or blessing
<i>bāṭin</i>	internal, inward or esoteric
<i>bē-Shar‘</i>	non-conforming to the <i>Sharī‘ah</i>
<i>bay‘at</i>	oath of allegiance
<i>bayt al-māl</i>	public exchequer or the treasury
<i>bīghah</i>	a unit of land for measurement
<i>chāshṭ</i> (prayer)	prayer performed immediately after sunrise
<i>daff</i>	drum
<i>dā‘irah</i>	a type of a Sufi dwelling
<i>damm</i>	lit., ‘to blow one’s breath’, usually done by a Sufi for blessing or healing an ailing person
<i>dānā</i>	wise
<i>dargāh</i>	a Sufi shrine or tomb
<i>darōghah</i>	gate-keeper
<i>dastārbandī</i>	the ritual of tying on of the turban signifying succession to an office
<i>dēlah</i>	a wild fruit
<i>darvēsh</i>	lit., ‘beggar who goes from door to door’, one who has given up all his worldly possessions, and either lives in a <i>khānqāh</i> or as a wandering mendicant
<i>darvēshī</i>	austerity or renunciation
<i>dawātdār</i>	in-charge of royal writing case
<i>dhikr</i>	remembrance of God; recollection of God’s presence
<i>dīnār</i>	a coin, a gold coin
<i>dīnpanāhi</i>	protection of religion
<i>dīwān</i>	a collection of poetry; also a title of the hereditary custodians of some of the Sufi shrines
<i>dīwān al-mustakhraj</i>	department for the realization of revenue arrears
<i>dīwān-i khayrāt</i>	charity department
<i>falāsifah</i>	philosophers
<i>fanā‘</i>	annihilation of the mortal self, or absorption into the Divine

<i>faqīr</i>	lit., 'poor', a Sufī who has assumed poverty as a life-style
<i>faqr</i>	voluntary poverty
<i>fātiḥah</i>	prayer for the deceased
<i>fatwā</i> (pl. <i>fatāwā</i>)	an edict, a legal verdict given by a <i>muftī</i>
<i>faujdar</i>	a military governor
<i>fiqh</i>	Muslim jurisprudence
<i>fuṭūḥ</i>	unsolicited offerings
<i>gaddī</i>	lit., 'a throne or seat of authority', hereditary custodianship of a Sufi shrine
<i>gaddī-nashīn</i>	hereditary custodian of a Sufi shrine
<i>ghazal</i>	a love song; a genre of poetry
<i>ghinā</i>	wealth, riches
<i>ghulām</i>	a slave
<i>ḥadīth</i> (pl. <i>aḥādīth</i>)	a tradition of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH)
<i>ḥājib</i>	chamberlain
<i>ḥakīm</i>	wise
<i>ḥaqq-i sharb</i>	a tax levied on artificial irrigation by canals
<i>ḥauḍ</i>	water reservoir
<i>ḥujrah</i>	a small room, a cell
<i>iḥyā'</i> (land)	bringing an unclaimed land under cultivation in an unpopulated area. According to Hanafite law, he who does so becomes the proprietor of that piece of land.
<i>ijtihād</i>	independent reasoning and judgment; a source of law in Sunni Islam
<i>ikhhlāṣ</i>	sincerity
<i>imām</i>	lit., 'leader', a prayer leader, also a designation used by Sunni religious scholars, and religious/spiritual and political heads in Shī'ism
<i>iqṭa'</i>	a transferable revenue assignment
<i>jāgīr</i>	land grant

<i>jamā'atkhānah</i>	a Sufi dwelling having a spacious hall where the Sufi Shaykh and his disciples live together, receive visitors and hold discussions
<i>jāmahdār</i>	robe bearer, or the one who dresses the Sultan
<i>Jāmi'</i> (mosque)	central mosque in a city
<i>jihād</i>	lit., to make an effort or struggle; often used for a holy war in Islam
<i>jītal</i>	a coin used in the Sultanate era
<i>kāfir</i>	non-believer
<i>kāsah-'i chaubīṇ</i>	wooden bowl
<i>khādim-i khāṣṣ</i>	personal attendant
<i>khalīfah</i> (pl. <i>khulāfa'</i>)	a spiritual successor; a disciple who is authorized by his preceptor to enroll disciples and impart spiritual training and instruction to the people
<i>Khān</i>	a title used by princes as well as members of the ruling elite; a title which referred to a rank in military organization of the Delhi Sultanate
<i>khānqāh</i>	a generic term used for all types of Sufi dwellings
<i>kharāj</i>	the land tax
<i>kharīṭahdār</i>	the treasurer
<i>khaṭīb</i>	lit., 'one who delivers sermons', the preacher
<i>Khaṭīb al-Khuṭabā'</i>	head of the deliverers of sermons, or the chief preacher
<i>khawf</i>	lit., fear, fear of God's wrath, the Day of Judgment, punishment and hellfire; fear of the resentment of God
<i>khilāfatnāmah</i>	patent of spiritual authority or certificate of spiritual succession
<i>khill'at</i>	robe of honour granted by a Caliph or a Sultan
<i>khilwat</i> or <i>khilwah</i>	retirement to seclusion, or solitude; retreat of a single Sufi, frequently a cell situated around a mosque
<i>khirqah</i>	a worn and patched cloak granted to a disciple by his/her preceptor symbolizing spiritual succession; initiatic mantle

<i>khuṭbah</i>	a sermon, generally of Friday Prayers
<i>Khwājah</i>	a title for a lord, master, noble, or an aristocrat; also used as an epithet for Sufi Shaykhs
<i>kōtwāl</i>	head of the police department
<i>kufr</i>	unbelief
<i>kullāh-i chahār tarkī</i>	a fourfold cap symbolizing renunciation
<i>kullāh</i>	a turban or a cap
<i>ma'arifah</i>	gnosis; profound comprehension of God
<i>madhhab</i> (pl. <i>madhāhib</i>)	juristic schools; schools of Muslim jurisprudence or <i>fiqh</i>
<i>madrasah</i>	a college of learning
<i>maḥabbah</i>	lit., love, love of God, or divine love in context of Sufism
<i>maḥḍar</i>	statement of a case or suit laid before a judge; appearance before a king
<i>Mahdī</i>	lit., 'one who is rightly-guided by God', a concept having messianic connotation, which refers to the awaited saviour who will restore justice in the Muslim community and return it to the proper path
<i>majdhūb</i>	lit., 'the drunken or the absorbed', an enraptured person, generally having lost sanity and self-control
<i>malāhidah</i>	atheists or freethinkers
<i>malāmatī</i>	lit., 'the blameworthy', Sufi not conforming to the norms of the society and the injunctions of <i>Sharī'ah</i>
<i>malfūz</i> (pl. <i>malfūzāt</i>)	the conversations/table talks, or the informal discourses of the Sufi Shaykhs recorded by their disciples
<i>Malik</i>	a title used by princes as well as members of ruling elite; a title which refers to a rank in military organization of the Delhi Sultanate
<i>mamlūk</i>	slaves
<i>manshūr</i>	legal investiture
<i>maskīnān</i>	the poor and the helpless
<i>mashāikh</i>	plural of Shaykh, Sufi teachers or instructors/guides

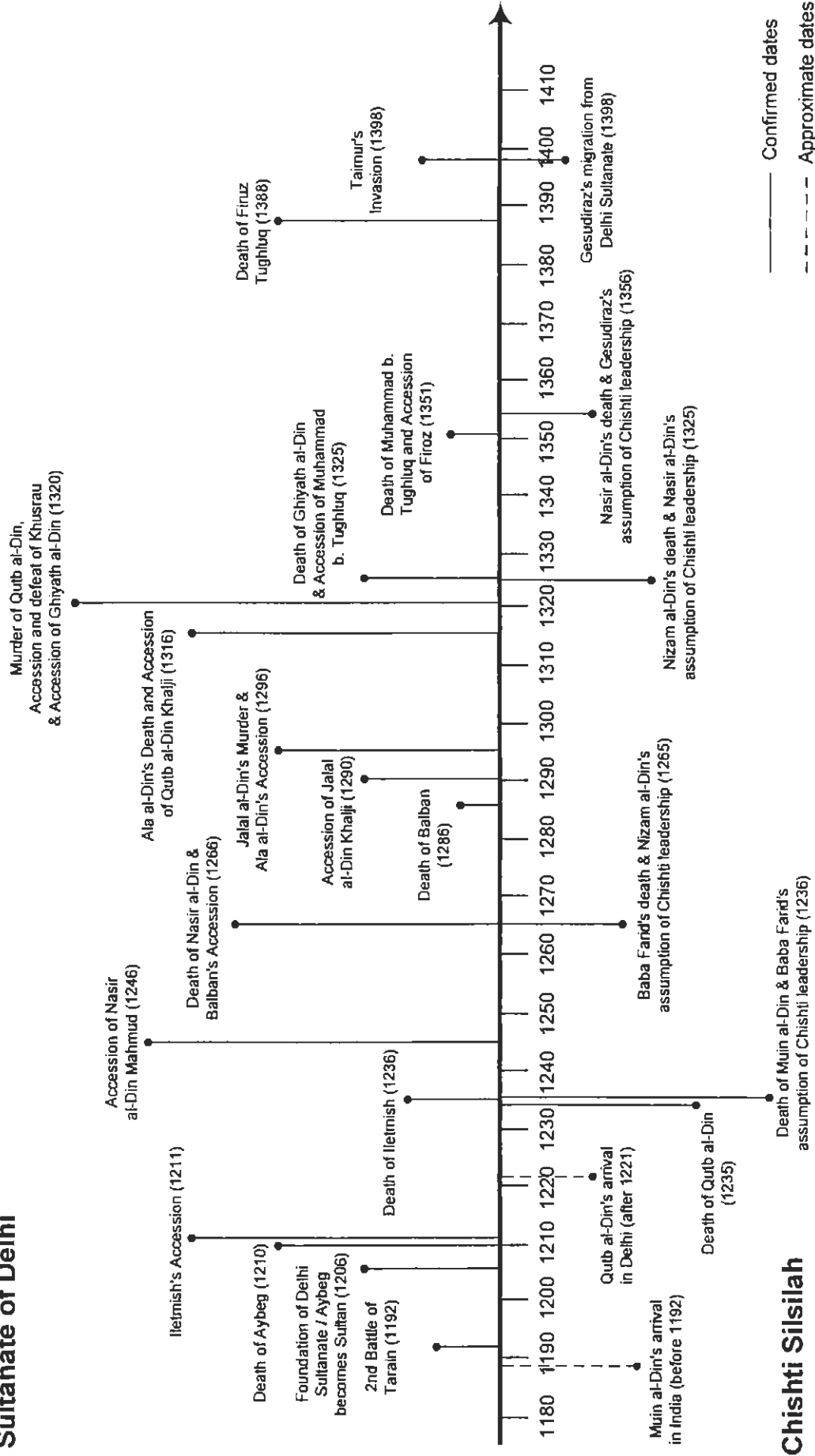
<i>mawlawī</i>	a title used for Muslim religious scholars
<i>mauza‘</i>	village
<i>miḥna</i>	an investigation of beliefs requiring the people as well as the religious notables to publicly profess the doctrine of the ‘createdness’ of the Quran, initiated by Caliph al-Māmūn under the influence of Mu‘tazilite thought
<i>mīr-i ‘imārāt</i>	the chief architect of the Empire
<i>mīr-i shikār</i>	the officer in-charge of the royal hunt
<i>mōmin</i>	a pious Muslim
<i>muftī</i>	a religious scholar having the authority to issue an edict
<i>muḥaddithīn</i>	traditionalists; experts of <i>aḥādīth</i>
<i>muḥāsabah</i>	self-examination
<i>muḥtasib</i>	the censor of public morals
<i>mukhbir</i>	spy or secret news reporter
<i>muqṭa‘</i> or <i>muqṭa‘dār</i>	chief officer of revenue grant, also known as <i>muqṭ‘i</i>
<i>murīd</i> (pl. <i>murīdīn</i>)	lit., ‘one who has made up his will’, a Sufi aspirant, a disciple or an initiate
<i>murshid</i>	a spiritual mentor, or a preceptor
<i>muṣḥaf-bardār</i>	keeper of the Quran
<i>muṣallah</i>	a prayer-mat
<i>mustaṣwif</i>	an imposter or a charlatan pretending to be a Sufi
<i>mutaṣawwif</i>	a person who strives to be a Sufi’; the Sufi aspirant
<i>nafs</i>	carnal soul; a blessing
<i>nā’ib bārbak</i>	deputy chamberlain and master of ceremonies
<i>naurōz</i>	Persian New Year festival
<i>nisba</i>	identity
<i>pāē’ bōs</i>	practice of toe-kissing
<i>pandit</i>	a Hindu priest and scholar
<i>pīlū</i>	a wild fruit
<i>pīr</i>	a Sufi guide, helper, healer or problem solver

<i>qalandar</i>	a libertine mendicant having strong antinomian and non-conformist tendencies
<i>qāḍī</i>	a Muslim judge
<i>qāḍī-i lashkar</i>	a separate judge for the army
<i>quṭb</i>	the spiritual ruler of the entire world
<i>quṭb or autād</i>	categories of Sufis in the spiritual hierarchy of the Sufis according to their spiritual status or proximity with God
<i>Qāḍī-i Mamālik</i>	Chief Judge in the Delhi Sultanate
<i>raḥmat al-Allāh ‘alayh</i>	may the blessings of God be on him
<i>Rajā or Mahrāj</i>	titles of Hindu rulers or kings
<i>raka‘t</i>	a part/section of Muslim prayer
<i>raqṣ</i>	devotional or ecstatic dance
<i>ribāṭ</i>	a kind of Sufi dwelling with a hostel or training-centre
<i>ṣadaqah</i>	an act of charity meant to ward off evil, suffering or disease
<i>Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr/Ṣadr-i Jahān</i>	In-charge of religious and judicial affairs in the Sultanate
<i>ṣaḥābī</i> (pl. <i>al-ṣaḥābah</i>)	a Companion of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH)
<i>sahri</i>	food taken at midnight before observing a fast
<i>ṣahw</i>	sobriety
<i>sajdah</i>	prostration
<i>sajjādah-nashīn</i>	hereditary custodian of a Sufi shrine
<i>sajjādah-nashīnī</i>	hereditary succession for the custodianship of a Sufi shrine
<i>ṣalāt</i>	ritual prayer in Islam
<i>samā‘</i>	devotional Sufi music; a Sufi concert
<i>shahanshāh</i>	lit., ‘king of the kings’, or ‘emperor’, a title used by rulers
<i>shāhī ṭabīb</i>	doctor of the royal family
<i>shaykh al-Islām</i>	lit., ‘the chief of Islam’, a permanent position or office in the administrative structure of the Delhi Sultanate, also an honorific title conferred upon eminent religious scholars by the Delhi Sultans
<i>shaykhzādah</i>	lit., ‘son of a Shaykh’, a title used by religious notables
<i>shalōks</i>	hymns in Punjabi language; a literary genre

<i>Sharī'ah</i>	the Islamic law; the legal dimension of Islam
<i>Shī'ism</i>	a major sect of Muslims, the other being Sunnism
<i>shirk</i>	polytheism
<i>shughl</i>	government service
<i>silsilah</i> (pl. <i>salāsīl</i>)	lit., a connection, a link or a chain; a spiritual lineage or an initiatic genealogy
<i>ṣuḥbah</i>	lit., companionship; the company of a Sufi master or Shaykh
<i>sukr</i>	ecstatic intoxication or drunkenness
<i>Sultān</i>	lit., 'one who wields political authority', an epithet used by Muslim kings and rulers
<i>sunnat-i ghayr mōkaddah</i>	supererogatory or non-obligatory parts of Muslim prayer
<i>t'awīdh</i>	an amulet
<i>tab' tābi'in</i>	the successors of the successors of the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH)
<i>tabarruk</i> (pl. <i>tabarrukāt</i>)	sacred relic of a holy person
<i>tābi'in</i>	the successors of the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH)
<i>tā'ifah</i>	a group of Sufis
<i>takht</i>	a throne-like low seat or a bed
<i>tankah</i>	a coin used in the Sultanate of Delhi
<i>tāq</i>	a shelf or a recess in the wall
<i>taqlīd</i>	strict conformism to any of the four major schools of Sunni jurisprudence, generally without questioning its logical bases
<i>ṭarīqah</i> (pl. <i>ṭurūq</i>)	lit., a path, a way, or a method; a spiritual lineage or an initiatic genealogy like a <i>silsilāh</i>
<i>taṣawwuf</i>	Sufism or the Muslim tradition of mysticism
<i>tasbīḥ</i>	rosary
<i>tafsīr</i>	exegesis of Quran
<i>tawbah</i>	penitence

<i>tawḥīd</i>	unity, oneness
<i>tawakkul</i>	trust in or reliance on God
<i>thānī</i>	the second one
<i>ummah</i>	the Muslim community
<i>‘urs</i>	lit., wedding, annual festival at a Sufi shrine commemorating the death anniversary of a Sufi
<i>Waḥdat al-Wujūd</i>	the concept of Oneness of Being/Phenomena; Ontological Monism
<i>wakīl-i dar</i>	superintendent of the ceremonies at the court and palace
<i>walāyat/walāyah</i>	lit., to be near, or to be close to; closeness or love of God, often translated as saintship or sainthood
<i>walī</i>	lit., a friend or a helper; a person who is close to God, or is considered to be a friend or protégé of God
<i>wālī</i>	governor of a province or region
<i>waqf</i> (pl. <i>awqāf</i>)	endowment
<i>wazīr</i>	a minister, or head of a department in administrative system of Delhi Sultanate
<i>wilāyat/wilāyah</i>	spiritual territory or domain under the spiritual jurisdiction of a Sufi Shaykh
<i>wizārat</i>	prime ministership
<i>yōgī/jōgī</i>	a Hindu ascetic or spiritualist
<i>Ẓāhir</i>	external, outward or exoteric
<i>Ẓālim</i>	tyrant
<i>zāwiyah</i>	a smaller Sufi dwelling where one Sufi Shaykh lives with his disciples and pupils
<i>zuhd</i>	heightened or concentrated piety
<i>zuhr</i> (prayer)	midday prayer

Sultanate of Delhi



Chishti Silsilah

APPENDIX III

(A) Lists of Real Names and Titles of the Delhi Sultans

Real Names	Titles adopted after Accession
Aybeg	Quṭb al-Dīn
Iletmish	Sulṭān al-Mu‘azzm Shams al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Abū 'l Muzaffar Nāṣir-i Amīr al-Mō'minīn
Fīrūz ibn Iletmish	Rukn al-Dīn
Raḍḍiyya bint Iletmish	Raḍḍiyyat al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn
Bahrām ibn Iletmish	Mu‘izz al-Dīn
Mas‘ūd ibn Fīrūz	'Alā' al-Dīn
Maḥmūd ibn Iletmish	Nāṣir al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn
Balban	Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn, Zill Allāh fi'l-arḍ ¹
Kēqubād	Mu‘izz al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn
Kēkā'ūs	Shams al-Dīn
Fīrūz Khaljī	Jalāl al-Dīn
Ibrāhīm Khaljī	Rukn al-Dīn
Muḥammad 'Alī Garshāsp	'Alā' al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn, Sikandar Thānī
'Umar Khaljī	Shihāb al-Dīn
Mubārak Khaljī	Quṭb al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn
Hasan (Barādō)	Nāṣir al-Dīn, Khusrau Khan
Tughluq	Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn (Ghāzī Malik
Muḥammad Jūnā Tughluq	Abū 'l-Mujāhid ²
Fīrūz Tughluq	Sulṭān al-'Aṣr wa al-Zamān al-Wāthiq bi-Naṣrih al-Raḥmān

¹ The 'Abbāsīd Caliphs had adopted the grandiose title of Zill Allāh fi'l-arḍ (Shadow of God on earth).

² During the period under study, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was the only Sultan of Delhi who discontinued the practice of adopting a title that referred to religion or 'al-Dīn.'

